BRET OR OWEN: WHICH HART BEATS STRONGER?

November 1994

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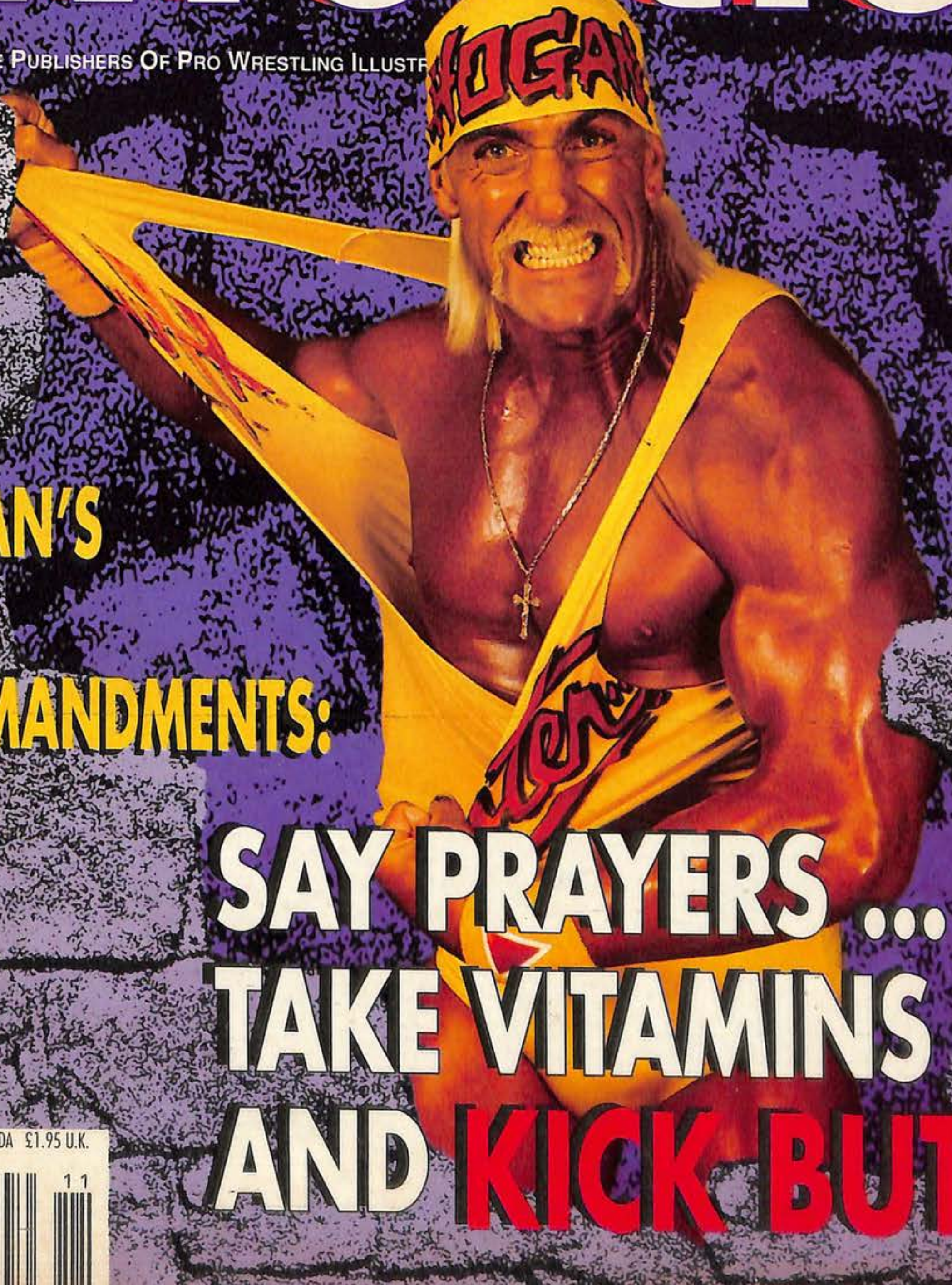

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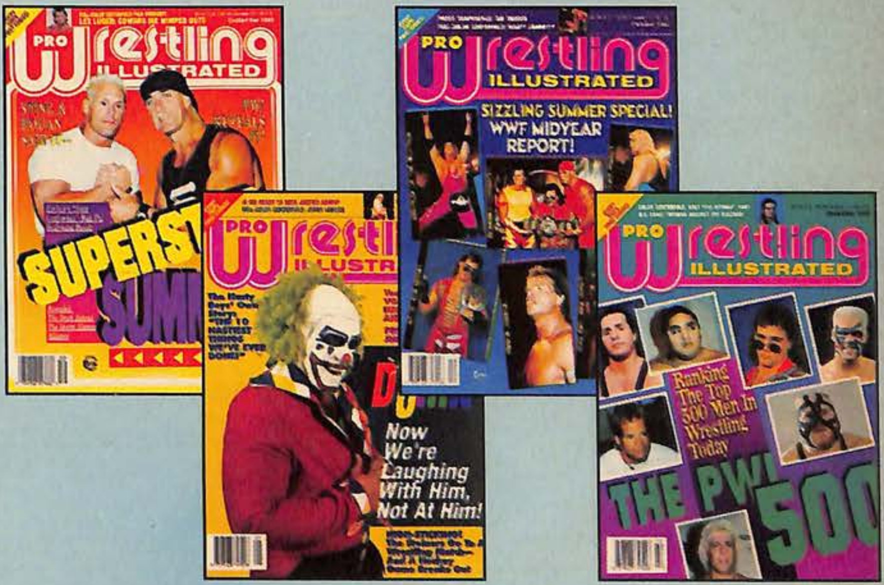

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The Wrestler

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YOUR LETTERS

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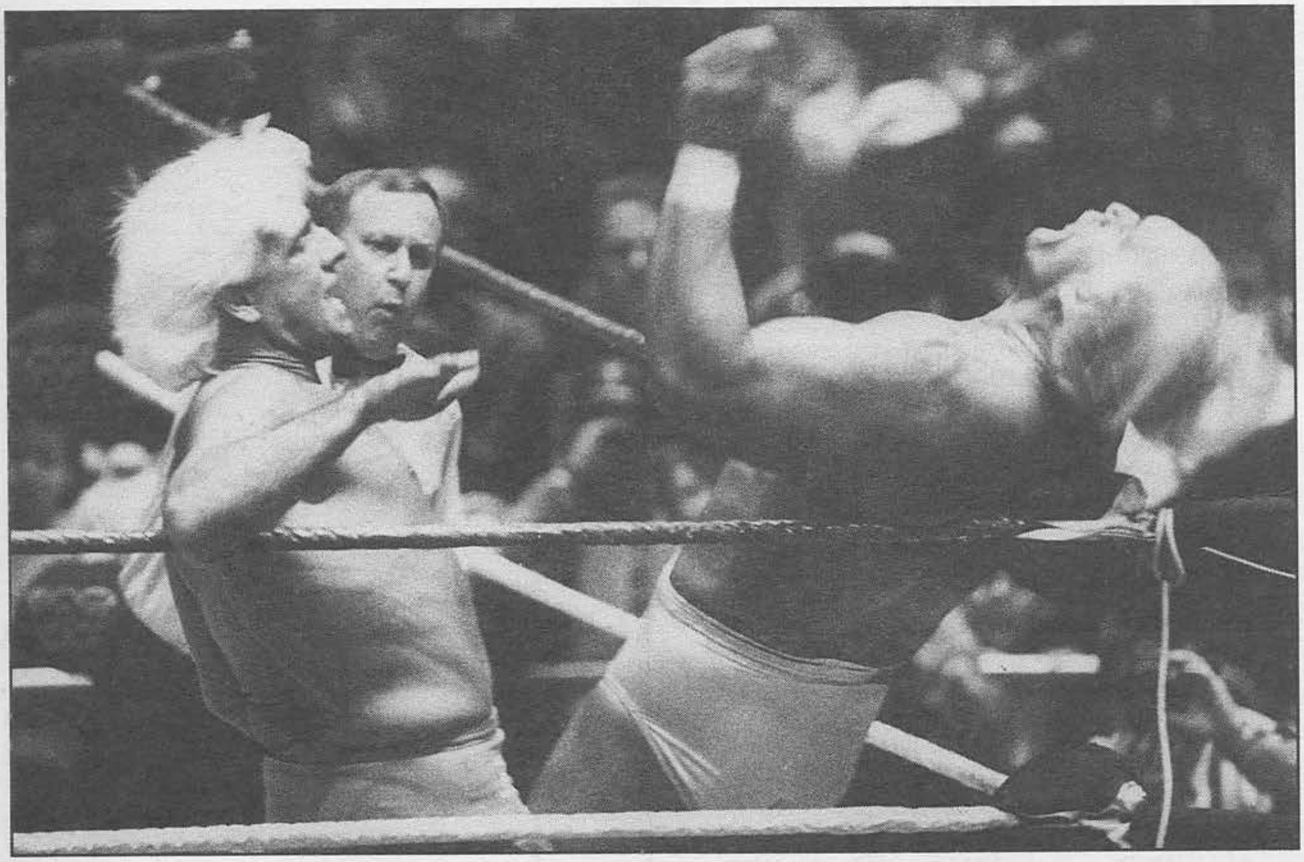


Ric Flair may be a rulebreaker, but is the best wrestler in history, claims reader John Teeman. He says the "Nature Boy" will prove it in his bouts against Hulk Hogan.

SIMPLY THE BEST

When Ric Flair returned to WCW in 1993, he was labeled a fan favorite. Now everyone is concerned that he is turning into a rulebreaker again. Why?! Everybody with half a brain knows that Flair is a born rulebreaker. It was only a matter of time before he returned to his roots. Rulebreaker or fan favorite, Ric is the best wrestler of all-time.

I've followed wrestling for more than 30 years and I've seen films of all the wrestlers from the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. Flair is the master of his trade—the best, pure and simple. He proved that Big Van Vader is not the unbeatable machine he claimed to be. Flair will eventually prove that "Hulkamania" is dead and Hulk Hogan is the most worthless piece of trash ever to get in the ring.

JOHN TEEMAN
Kalamazoo, MI

BLAYZE DOUSER

I really enjoyed your article on Luna Vachon ("Can Luna Vachon Douse Alundra's Blayze?" August 1994). I cannot wait to see the lovely Luna wearing the WWF World Women's belt. I know she can win it. If she could drive Sherri Martel out of the WWF, there's no doubt she can win the title from Blayze. If there was a feud brewing between me and Luna, I know I wouldn't be caught in the same

arena as her. Her family background is enough to intimidate me! Alundra will need all the luck in the world to keep her Blayze burning. Go, Luna!

STEPHANIE DeLAZERDA
Universal City, TX

PG-13 DOESN'T RATE

The people in charge in the USWA should be ashamed of themselves. When Wolfie D and J.C. Ice (PG-13) both dropped loser-leaves-the-USWA matches this winter, they should have been banned from the federation for life. The least the USWA could have done is kept them away for two or three years. They weren't even gone three months! They were welcomed back into the federation with open arms.

As soon as they came back, they were permitted to wrestle for the tag team title and they won it. Ice and Wolfie weren't forced to wrestle in those loser-leaves-town matches. No one twisted their arms. That means they should be forced to deal with the consequences. I don't think PG-13's title victory should be recognized!

MELISSA WILLIAMS
Memphis, TN

Luna Vachon has a fan in reader Stephanie DeLazerda. She respects Vachon's family background, and predicts she will win the WWF World Women's title from Alundra Blayze.

COWARD JACK

Cactus Jack has been called many things during his career. Fearless. A daredevil. A maniac. After reading "Cactus Jack's Bloody Bounty: 'Bring Me Vader's Ear!'" (August 1994), I've got a new one: coward. So Jack wants someone like Sting Or The Guardian Angel to pay back Vader for him? Does anyone else find this hypocritical and cowardly on Jack's part? Since when does he need to employ others to do his dirty work?

Here's my theory: Vader beat Jack at his own violent game several times. Realizing this, Jack must be deathly afraid of him, so he took to hiding behind Maxx Payne and the Sullivans. Disgusting! I've never really cheered for Jack, but I did admire his tenacity and respected him for fighting his own battles. Not anymore. Mr. "Bang Bang" is out of ammo.

HARRY SIMON
Las Vegas, NV

NATURAL DISASTER

It's good to see Typhoon back in the WWF, but he is making a huge mistake by starting a feud with Yokozuna. To me, the Samoan nightmare looks angrier than ever. He has a lot to prove now that he doesn't have the WWF title. People say he isn't as intimi-

(Continued on page 52)

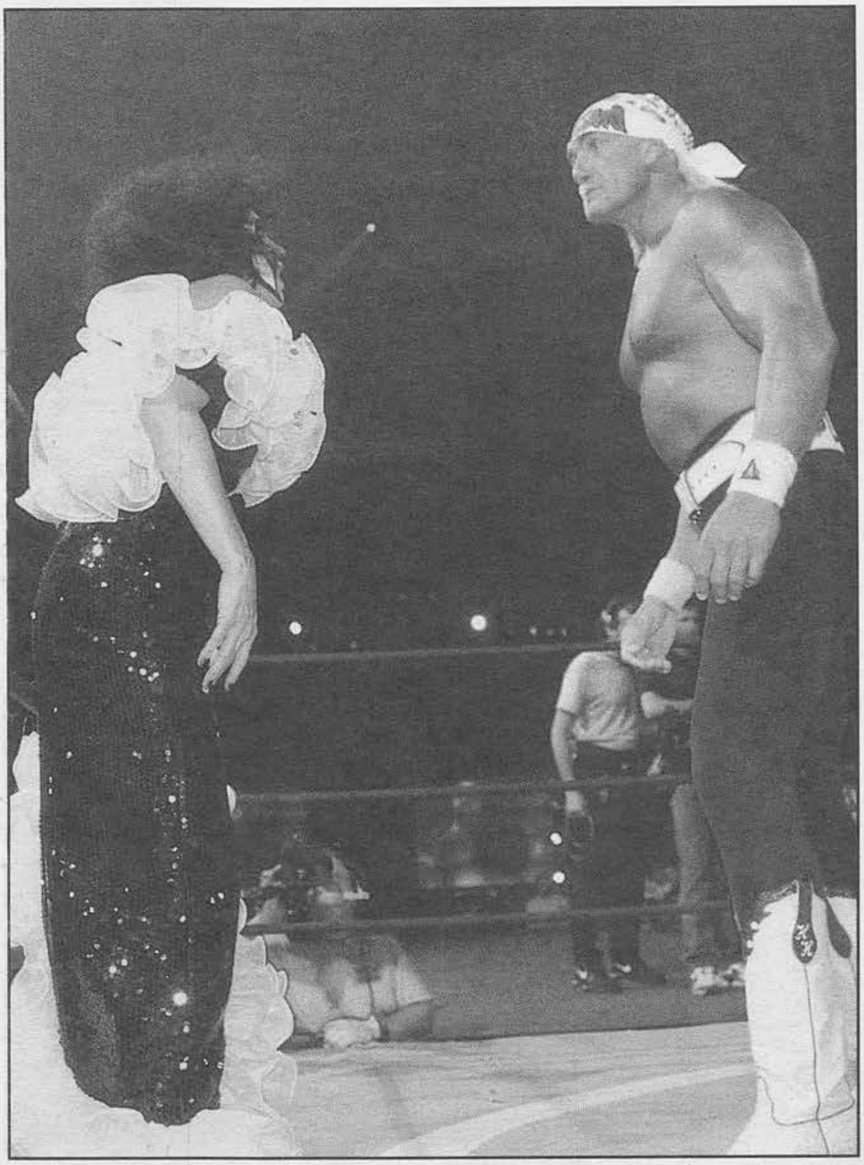
WHAT'S HAPPENING

By Bill Apter

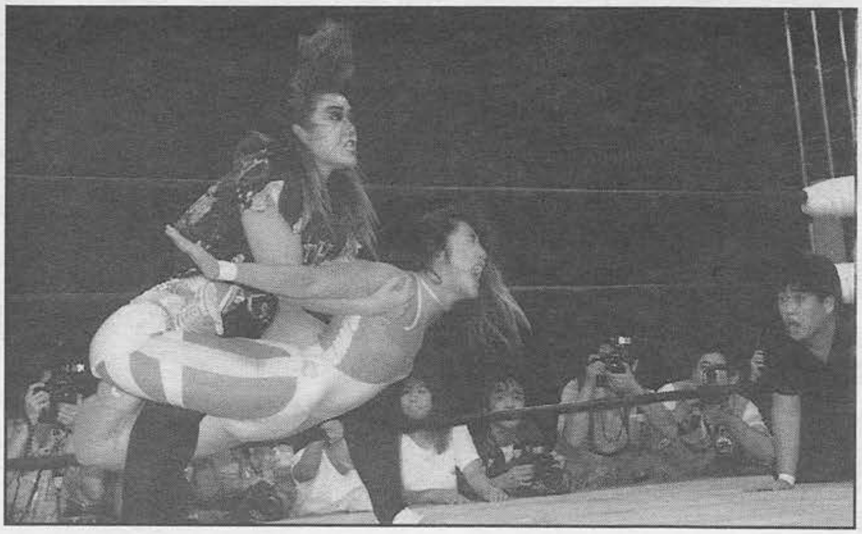
TO BORROW A line from **Yogi Berra**, WCW must seem like "deja vu all over again" to **Hulk Hogan.** The "Hulkster" enters **Ted Turner's** federation, and whom does he find in his way? None other than **Sherri Martel**, who was aligned with **Randy Savage** when the "Macho Man" and Hogan had their differences in the WWF.

Sherri, now referred to as "Sensuous" rather than "Sensational," is in the camp of World champion **Ric Flair.** At Clash of the Champions XXVII in Charleston, South Carolina, she appeared to be on the side of Flair's rival, **Sting,** and was even wearing his style of face paint. Sting assumed she was on his side, too. That assumption turned out to be his undoing.

At the height of the intense struggle, Flair shoved Sherri into the path of Sting's flying bodypress, and she fell to the floor and hit her head against a ring railing. Sting showed concern for her condition, but it was a ruse on Sherri's part. Flair kicked Sting from behind, and rolled him up for the pin after Sting was again distracted. Flair and Sherri then hugged, making it clear to all that they



Sherri Martel has seen that look in Hulk Hogan's eyes before and knows she's in trouble. Fortunately for her, Ric Flair pulled her from the ring by her ankle.



Alundra Blayze's next challenge may come from Bull Nakano. The brawny Japanese star may be brought in by Luna Vachon to take on the WWF World Women's champion.

were partners in crime, and both went after Sting.

Hogan entered the ring on Sting's behalf, and after chasing Flair, turned to Sherri. She slapped the "Hulkster" and then was pulled from the ring by Flair. No one ever said it would be easy, Hulk.

At the same Clash, **Lord Steven Regal** appeared in a white powdered wig, as if he were an English judge. He was forced to take it off during his match, but didn't need it. Regal recaptured the TV title he had lost the month before, pinning and gaining revenge on **Larry Zbyszko**.

"I have made it clear to you colonists that I am the world's premier technical wrestler," Regal said. "That senior citizen Zbyszko can return to his broadcast booth, content that somehow the fates allowed him a brief reign. A freak happening, of course."

As a wrestler, **Ted DiBiase** was one of the slyest competitors around. His mat career isn't necessarily over. Even though he's sat out 1994 due to a neck injury he suffered in Japan, the "Million-Dollar Man" is proving to be just as wily a manager.

He began his stable with **Nikolai Volkoff**, capitalizing on the Russian immigrant's inability to support his family. While one can rightly condemn DiBiase for turning the poor Volkoff into a pathetic rulebreaker, Nikolai hasn't wrestled this aggressively in years.

From there, DiBiase recruited what he claims to be **The Undertaker**, although there are indications that his 'Taker is a fake. Undertaker's original manager, **Paul Bearer**, has called DiBiase a liar and says he has been in contact with his wrestler. Next for Ted was bringing **Bam Bam Bigelow** and his main squeeze, **Luna Vachon**, into the fold. Bigelow is arguably the WWF's best super heavyweight, and associating with DiBiase may finally push the "Beast From The East" over the top. At press time, the "Million-Dollar Man" is trying to lure **Lex Luger** into his stable. Will he succeed? Stay tuned.

Vachon's had difficulty beating WWF World Women's champion **Alundra Blayze**, so she may hire someone else to do the job. Luna reportedly wants to import and manage Japanese star **Bull Nakano**, who at 5'6" and 210 pounds certainly has more brawn than the 5'9½", 150-pound Blayze. However, Nakano was injured on a Japanese card just before press time, and it's not certain if this will affect any potential matches.

Nevertheless, give Blayze credit for dominating the domestic women's scene, thin as it may be.

If ECW had moved the **Cactus Jack-Sabu** match a few blocks east of ECW Arena to the docks along the Delaware River, it would have had an appropriate site for

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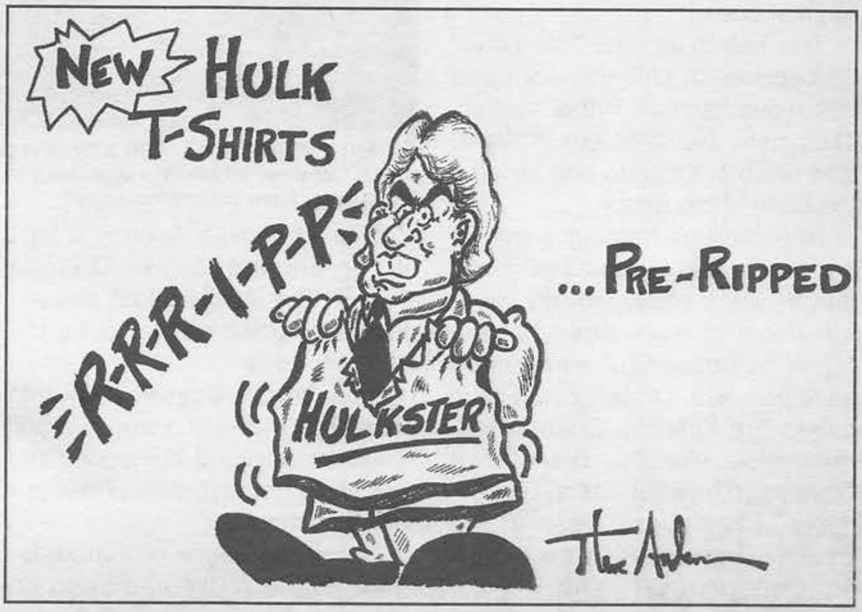


NO HOLDS BARRED

with David Rosenbaum

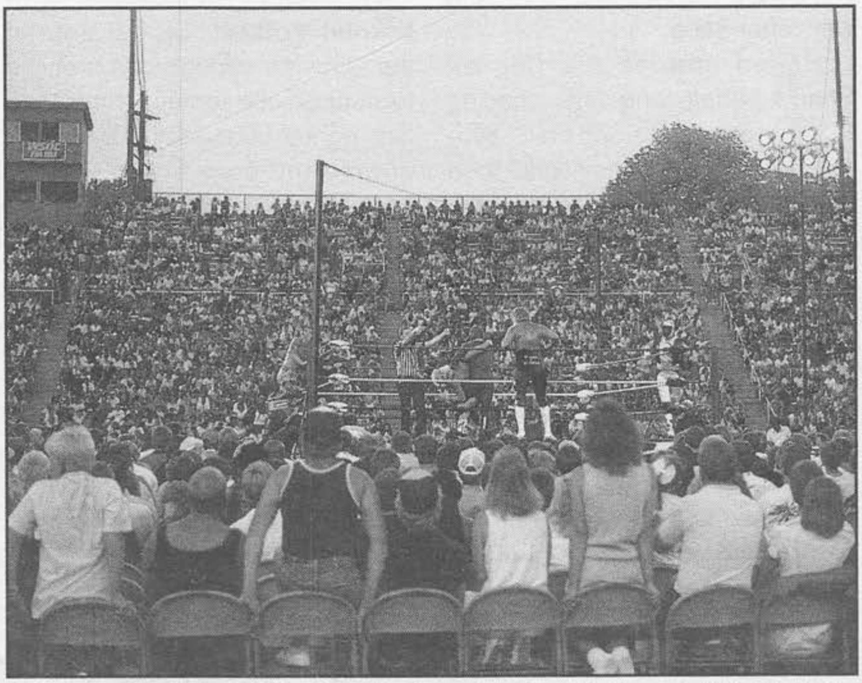
THE BEST-KEPT SECRET in Florida is that there are beautiful, white sand beaches in Orlando. I'm not sure where they are, but they're probably tucked in somewhere between Universal Studios and Epcot Center.

Or maybe they're talking about that fantasy beach at Disney World. Disney's Polynesian Resort. You know, the one where you're supposed to imagine you're on a tropical island, even though you're about 70 miles from the nearest ocean.

This has to be true. There must be beaches in Orlando, complete with waves and all. WCW said so. They held the 1994 Great American Bash in Orlando and called it the Bash at the Beach.

Nobody was holding a gun to their heads. They could've called the '94 Bash whatever they wanted. It could have been held in Miami or Tampa Bay, which really have beaches. Or they could have called the Orlando Bash something else, like The Disaster at Disney or The Bash at the Shaq.

No. They chose Bash at the Beach. The pay-per-view advertisements depicted waves.



A Bash is a Bash, isn't it? In 1987, The Great American Bash was held in Charlotte, North Carolina, which has one thing in common with Orlando, Florida: Both are miles away from the nearest beach.

Even Hurricane Andrew wasn't strong enough to give Orlando waves. The Atlantic just doesn't go that far, and neither does the Gulf of Mexico.

Bash at the Beach? Was this somebody's idea of a stupid joke?

I recently heard somebody say that Hulk Hogan's arrival will put WCW on the map.

Forget the idiocy of that statement, since WCW has been on the map for a long time. Now it's on the map with people who only know Hulk Hogan.

But what map is that?

On WCW's map, Orlando is on the ocean and The Everglades are a tundra. The Shenandoah Valley is a desert and Cape Cod is landlocked. There isn't a beach to be found on Long Island. The Finger Lakes are rivers. The Great

(Continued on page 54)

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BLINDSIDED

BY ANDY RODRIGUEZ

JIM NEIDHART'S RETURN to prominence in the WWF is welcome news for Owen Hart. Owen today can call himself King of the Ring thanks to Neidhart's interference on Owen's behalf at the June 19 tournament in Baltimore.

Owen doesn't care that controversy taints the victory. He is overjoyed because he has scored points on his older and more successful brother, Bret. The way he scored those points is, to him, unimportant.

Not unimportant to Neidhart, though.

Neidhart, a long way from his days as WWF World tag team champion with Bret in The Hart Foundation, demonstrated he could still do something meaningful in the sport. It was meaningful in a bad way, but significant nonetheless.

Jimmy Hart, Neidhart's old manager in The Hart Foundation, says he believes his former charge is going to be one of the most important players in the WWF over the next several months.

"He's already changed the Hart situation drastically," said the manager. "Bret and Owen are bigger enemies now than they ever were, and Jim is a big reason for that. Stirring up trouble is one of his specialties."

Hart—who's not related to Owen and Bret—paused, then added: "Of course, I taught him a lot about stirring up trouble. He's good at it. I suppose I could be proud of that. Maybe if I had been a different person back then, Jim would be a different person now. But that's all history. Besides, he had a nasty streak way before I managed him. I really hope Jim calms down."

Bret Hart & Jim Neidhart

Some hope. Neidhart doesn't cringe when someone calls him a maniac. Actually, he likes being considered wild.

"I call him more of a 'controlled wild,'" said Davey Boy Smith, who has wrestled with and against Neidhart. "He isn't out of control like Sabu or Cactus Jack or people like that. He'll wrestle pretty straightforward in a match and then suddenly lose it at a key moment. He keeps opponents guessing as to when precisely he'll snap. Usually, they're surprised anyway.

"It's all calculated. It's not like he's losing his temper. He knows exactly at what point in the match it will happen."

Partners at other times and in other federations agree that is how Neidhart operates. He is not rash, but calculating. Definitely not a hothead.

"He's got that real angular crew cut and that pointy beard and that evil little laugh," said Jake Roberts, an old nemesis. "He looks like a real nut job. But there's a mind underneath it all. Back when he was tagging with Bret in the Foundation, Neidhart was calling the shots a lot more often than some people thought. Got into a lot of arguments with Jimmy Hart over strategy. No, James Neidhart is no dummy."

That concerns Bret tremendously. He knows Neidhart well. He realizes his old partner is capable of costing him the World championship.

"When Bret and I spoke the other day," said his older brother, Bruce, "he talked a lot about his days teaming with Neidhart. It was like he was wondering if he had ever done anything to antagonize Neidhart that much. He couldn't think of anything specifically, but it still had him concerned."

Maybe Neidhart can't stand to see his old teammate at the top of the world while he, Neidhart, languishes. Maybe he wants to form a winning partnership with Owen. Remember, they were teammates once, in The New Foundation.

Maybe. Most likely, Bret Hart is looking for a reason where there is no reason. As Jimmy Hart said, Neidhart likes to "stir up trouble." Why does a cool calculator like "The Anvil" need a reason for that? □

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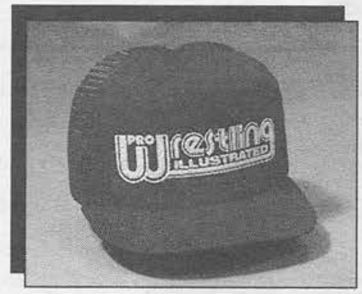

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Hulk Hogan hails from which California beach community?
1) Malibu
2) Pacific Heights
3) Venice Beach
4) Newport Beach

At what University did Ron Simmons play football?
1) Notre Dame
2) Florida State University
3) Michigan State University
4) Oglethorpe University

True or False: Giant Gonzales competed in the 1984 Olympics as a member of Argentina's water polo team
1) True
2) False

The Undertaker was once tag team partners with...
1) Lou Albano
2) Sergeant Slaughter
3) Rick Steiner
4) None of the above

How did you do? If you're up for the challenge and want to put your wrestling knowledge to work, call now and go for the $250!

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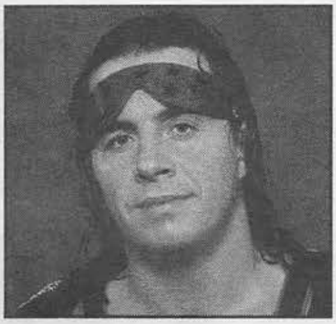
Thumbs Up

Each Issue, *The Wrestler* will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.

Thumbs Up to Lord Steven Regal. He often calls himself the "world's greatest scientific wrestler," but rarely proves it in the ring. Instead, Regal usually cheats or relies on interference by manager Sir William. Regal finally showed his good, talented side at Clash of the Champions XXVII by regaining the WCW TV title from Larry Zbyszko. He wrestled a clean match and achieved the pin on his own. Let's hope this is a sign of things to come. Regal is, indeed, a talented wrestler who doesn't have to cheat nor belittle America. Perhaps he can reinvent himself as a fan favorite. If so, we're ready to root him on!

Thumbs Up to Cactus Jack. Wrestling in falls-count-anywhere matches in WCW and then leaving to battle Sabu in ECW is going out of the frying pan and into the fire. Give Cactus credit for not taking any easy matches when he arrived in ECW. While the New Mexican madman lost by pinfall thanks to interference by Paul E. Dangerously, he managed to strike Sabu with a frying pan, throw a trash can at him, and slam 911 with a chair. We don't condone these acts, but merely note Cactus is a brave gamer who never backs away from a challenge. Beating Sabu is the ultimate challenge in ECW; Cactus is ready to meet it.

Thumbs Up to Bambi. The Georgia native made a trip to Smoky Mountain recently to teach Tammy Fytch, once and for all, that managing and wrestling are apples and oranges. Over the years, Bambi has battled virtually every woman wrestler of note on this continent, and is considered one of the toughest competitors around. In contrast, Fytch earned her stripes solely as a manager and never realized how difficult it is to wrestle. She may now, after she, Brian Lee, and Chris Candido lost a series of matches to Bambi and The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Show your purported smarts, Tammy, and stick to managing.

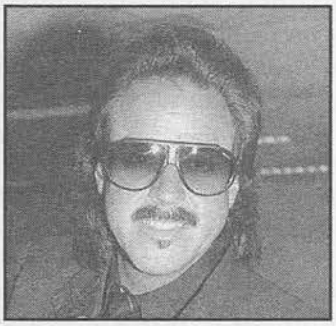


Thumbs Up to Bret Hart. While Owen Hart keeps talking, Bret Hart keeps winning. The WWF World championship belt is his property because he's not only the best wrestler in the Hart family, but the best in the WWF. Owen should realize he's not the only one living in his brother's shadow. So are Diesel, Razor Ramon, Lex Luger, Tatanka, Yokozuna, and all of the other WWF wrestlers. Jim Neidhart wrestled in Hart's shadow, too, when they teamed as The Hart Foundation. Owen must understand Bret wasn't handed his glory, but earned it through hard work. There's no reason "The Rocket" can't do likewise.

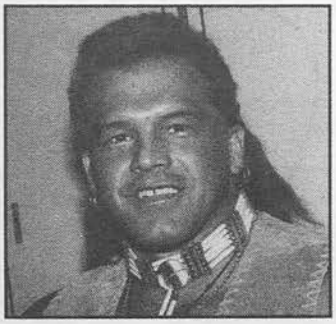
Thumbs Down

Thumbs Down to Sherri Martel. Scary? Sensational? Sensuous? By any name, she's a backstabbing witch. Sting was foolish to believe she was there for him at Clash of the Champions XXVII, but we can't blame a man for trusting others. We condemn Sherri because she always goes about getting attention in the wrong way. She's never productive, always destructive. Face it: Hulk Hogan and Ric Flair were headed for a showdown without Sherri's help. She merely managed to position herself in a spot of power. Watch out, Flair. She'll hurt you, just like she hurt Shawn Michaels and Randy Savage.

Thumbs Down to Ted DiBiase. The "Million-Dollar Man" thinks he can buy the world and every wrestler in it. Not so, if a report in the current issue of *Inside Wrestling* is correct. DiBiase supposedly has no money to spend, and even if he does, he's about to destroy several very promising careers. What's his managerial experience? How can he help Bam Bam Bigelow, Nikolai Volkoff, Luna Vachon, Lex Luger, and the ersatz Undertaker? Sorry, Ted, main events are not for sale. Undertaker, Bigelow, Volkoff, and Vachon are trading in their careers for promises that will never be kept.

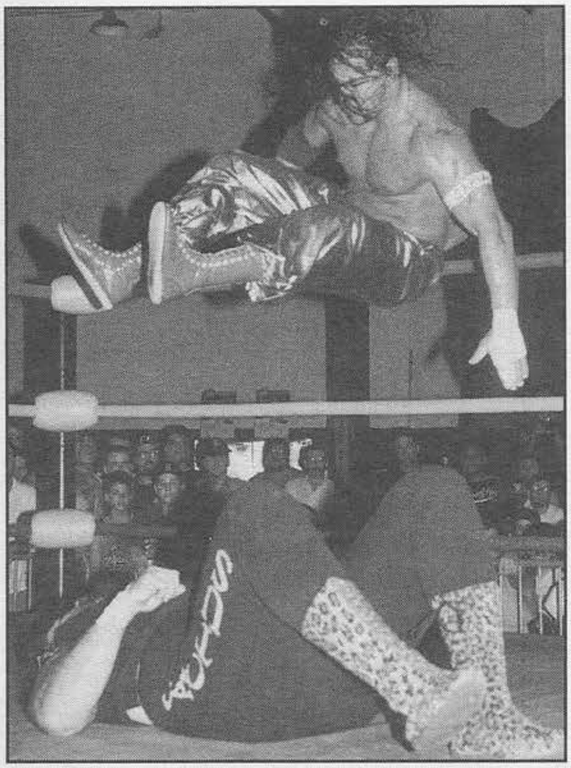


Thumbs Down to Jimmy Hart. Why did he encourage Hulk Hogan to strike Sherri Martel at Clash of the Champions XXVII, especially after the issue of domestic violence has been brought to the forefront by the O.J. Simpson saga? And worse, why did the fans cheer Hart's encouragement? This is a sick world we live in. Sure, Sherri did the wrong thing, but it's up to WCW officials to censure her and not let violence beget violence. Had Hogan struck Sherri, he would have sent a dangerous message to his fans. Thankfully, he didn't. Hart should have half as much common sense.



Thumbs Down to Tatanka. Intensity is a wonderful quality for a wrestler to have, but this Native American seems to have too much of a good thing. He was rightly angered at Irwin R. Schyster for destroying his ceremonial headdress, but the best revenge would have been to humble IRS in a series of matches. Tatanka has indeed dominated the bouts, but has regularly been disqualified for shoving the referee. It's ironic, because when Tatanka was a rising star on the WWF roster, he seemed to have a great deal of self-discipline. He must learn to channel that energy in a positive direction.

CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS



ECW fans expected mayhem when Sabu met Cactus Jack, and that's precisely what they got. Sabu hits Cactus with a legdrop en route to victory. Sabu later got assistance from his manager, Paul E. Dangerously.

Philadelphia, PA *(Correspondent—Joe Vincent):* For lovers of brawling and mayhem, this was a dream match. ECW Arena was full of rabid fans, ready to watch two mat maniacs—independent star Sabu and WCW's unpredictable Cactus Jack—battle for the first time.

It was as wild as most people expected.

The wrestlers were initially content to keep their action in the ring, but Sabu's handler, 911, became involved and slammed Cactus onto a ringside table outside the ring. Sabu then tried a moonsault from the top rope, but Jack slid out of the way. Sabu grazed his chin on the security railing and started bleeding from the mouth.

Eventually Sabu earned the pin after his manager, Paul E. Dangerously, hit Jack with his cellular phone. But in typical ECW fashion, the action didn't stop even after the verdict had been awarded.

The brawl spilled over into the concession area, and flying chairs and a frying pan became weapons. Both soon returned to the ring, where Sabu hit Cactus over the head with an amber bottle. Jack retaliated by throwing Sabu from the ring, then thwarting a 911 attack by hitting him with a chair. All in all, just your everyday ECW anarchy.

In other bouts: Tommy Dreamer pinned Hack Myers ... The Bruise Brothers beat Mr. Hughes & Shane Douglas ... "Ironman" Tommy Cairo (with Peaches) defeated Sandman (with Woman) by disqualification in a Singapore-cane-on-a-pole match after Sandman used a second cane on Cairo ... Tasmaniac beat Pit Bull Psycho Mike in a dog collar match after a top-rope suplex. Once the match ended, a second Pit Bull attacked Tasmaniac ... ECW TV champion Mikey Whipwreck defeated The Rockin' Rebel by disqualification ... Terry & Dory Funk beat ECW tag team champions Public Enemy by disqualification after Paul E. Dangerously interfered.

Columbia, SC *(Correspondent—Bettina Zerega):* Col. Robert Parker is supposedly no longer appearing at ringside for Steve Austin's matches. That may not be good news for the U.S. champion, if a recent match with Sting is indicative.

Fans at the Township Auditorium watched them wrestle cautiously in the first few minutes before each started attacking. Things heated up and Austin had

(Continued on page 50)

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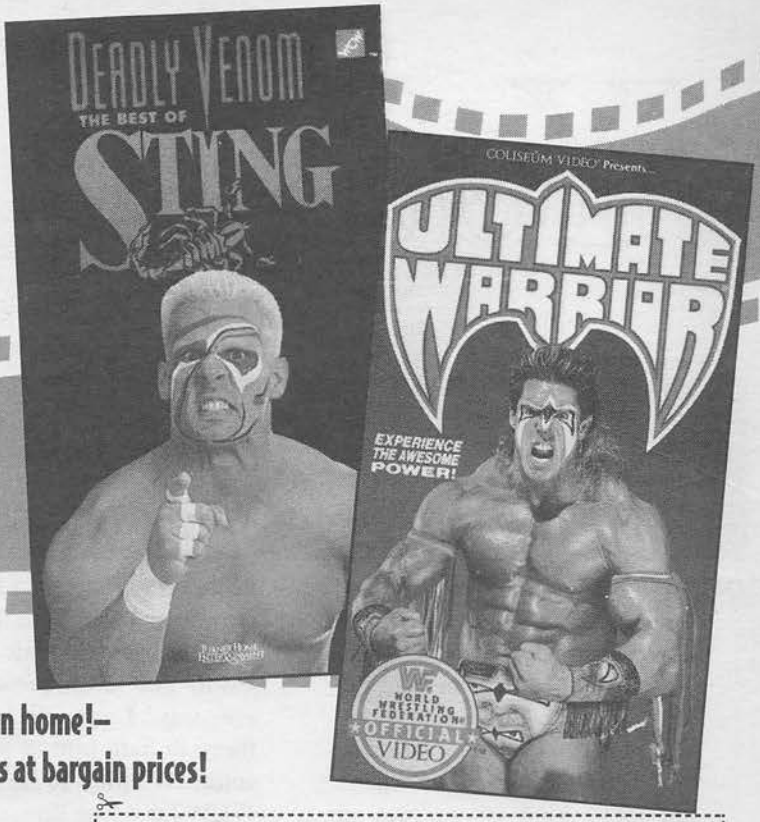

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You Asked Us

Here's the monthly feature that YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR questions! Only the best questions will be answered, so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to:

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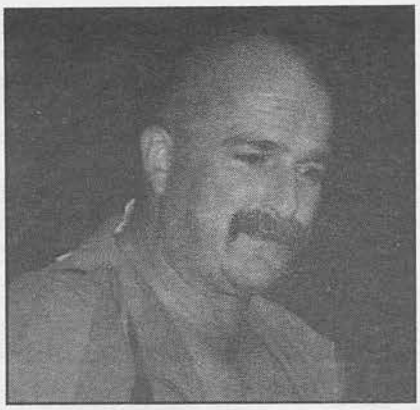

Jake Roberts may be without his hair after losing a stipulation match to Konnan in Mexico. However, "The Snake" says any opponent who pokes fun at his condition will suffer far more.

Q: "My question is for Jimmy Hart: Back in 1987, you managed the WWF Intercontinental champion, The Honky Tonk Man, and the WWF World tag team champions, The Hart Foundation, at the same time. Do you think you can achieve the same kind of success in WCW?"—Eric Thornton, Kent, WA

A: **"The immortal Hulk Hogan is my only concern in WCW right now, Eric," replied Hart. "When Ric Flair started mouthin' off about him, I could see the fire in the Hulk's eyes. I knew he was just itchin' to get back into the ring. I remember tellin' him, 'Hulkster', you can beat Ric Flair. You still got it. You're the greatest there ever was.' I also told him I'd be there to help him in any way I could. We plan to be on top of WCW for a long time, my friend. I'm happy you remembered all the success I had in the past, and I have a few old acquaintances in WCW. With Hulk Hogan on my side, I know I can achieve all kinds of success in WCW!"**

Jimmy Hart made sweet music when he managed Honky Tonk Man to the WWF Intercontinental title. But the "Mouth Of The South" expects to register his greatest hit with Hulk Hogan in WCW.

***

Q: "I have a question for Jake 'The Snake' Roberts: It had to be embarrassing for you to have your head shaved after you lost to Konnan. Wasn't it humiliating to have to go back to Smoky Mountain and defend your heavyweight title after that?"—Donna Richardson, Waynesboro, VA

A: **"No, no, I wouldn't use the word 'embarrassing' to describe this particular situation," said Roberts. "In fact, this was the worst mistake a punk like Konnan could have ever made. Now, any man who has the guts to step into the ring with me will pay for what happened down there in Mexico. Yes, that includes the 'Dirty White Boy.' Any foe who dares to laugh at me will pay a very high price. Then we shall see exactly who is humiliated ... and who is laughing!"**

***

Q: "This question is for Sherri Martel: You've managed so many wrestlers over the years. Of all of them, which one do you think is the best?"—Matt Grundy, Columbia, SC

A: **"They all had to be great if I was willing to be in their corner," said Sherri. "Randy Savage, Shawn Michaels, Shane Douglas ... they were all at their best when they had me by their side. I know how to get the best out of the men I manage! That's why I took my time scouting out all the talent in WCW. Just as I thought, I didn't have to look any further than 'the man,' Ric Flair. He is the best I've been around. Just thinking about how all those fans thought I was actually on Sting's side at the Clash makes Ric and me laugh. I don't associate with losers. Sting should paint the word 'loser' on his face. Last I saw him, he was lying flat on his back in the middle of the ring."**

***

Q: "My question is for Paul Roma: You had the chance to become a great wrestler when you joined The Four Horsemen. How could you be so stupid and throw all that way just so you could team up with a louse like Paul Orndorff?"—Larry Evans, Kansas City, MO

(Continued on page 58)

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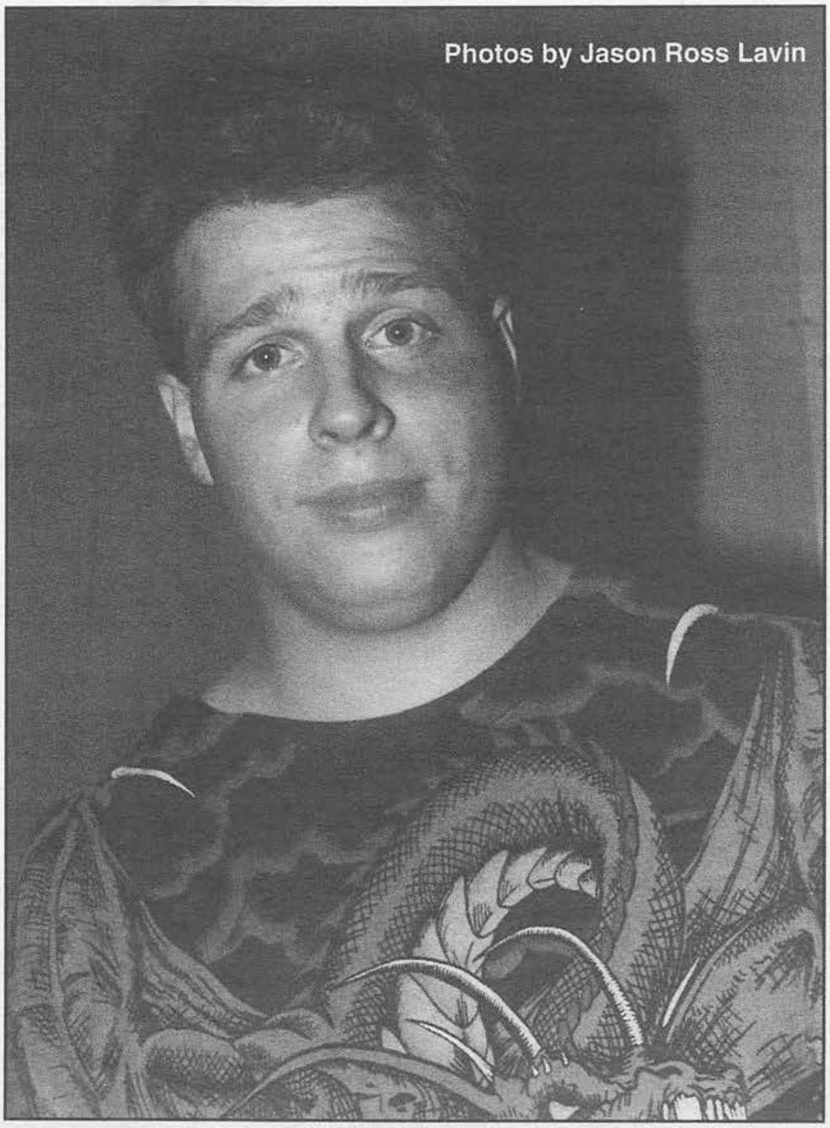
INTRODUCING

MIKEY WHIPWRECK

By Dave Lenker



Photos by Jason Ross Lavin

Mikey Whipwreck is living the dream of every wrestler by holding a title belt—in his case, the ECW TV championship. But for Whipwreck, the dream is also a nightmare, because every rival in the federation is after him.

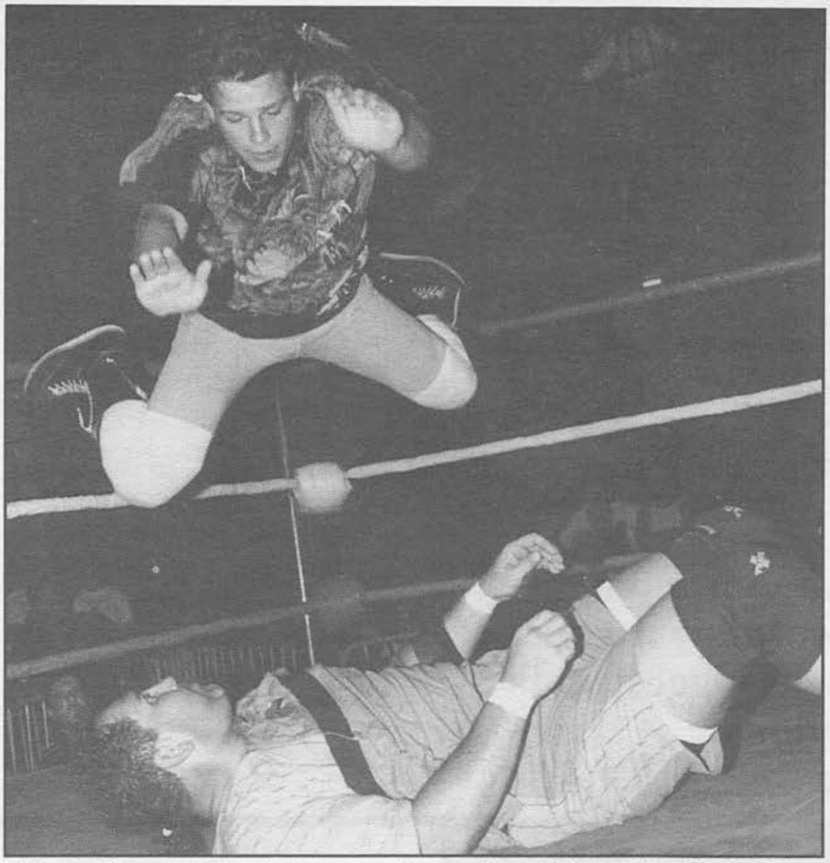
MIKEY WHIPWRECK does not get much sleep these days. Sometimes he gets so nervous, he can't even eat. Even the sound of a phone ringing is enough to make him jump out of his chair.

Poor Mikey. His story is one of the strangest in wrestling. A few months ago, the Buffalo, New York, native was happy just to be involved in the sport. He was an ECW preliminary wrestler who got demolished by whomever he faced.

"Getting the chance to wrestle was a dream come true," he said, "even if I wasn't very good. When I first started in ECW, nobody knew who I was. And I wasn't complaining, because when you get a little famous, then people are out to get you. That what's happening now. It's really scary for me."

His fortunes took a turn for the better—or, according to him, for the worse—on May 13, 1994, in Philadelphia. He was wrestling ECW TV champ Pit Bull Psycho Mike. As usual, he was getting pounded. Pit Bull refused to pin Mikey. He wanted to punish him more. Then, with the referee distracted, Tasmaniac, Pit Bull's

He's the laughingstock of ECW dressing rooms. Even preliminary wrestlers intimidate him. His best offensive moves are pokes to the eyes and tweaks of the nose. Yet somehow, 5'7", 187-pound Mikey Whipwreck won the ECW TV title



Whipwreck's repertoire of maneuvers is very limited, though he did hit Rocco Rock with a splash from the ropes in one match. Opponents usually want so badly to destroy him that they end up getting themselves disqualified.

arch-rival, interfered and kayoed him.

Mikey extended one of his arms across Pit Bull's chest. Three slaps of the mat later, Mikey had his first win as a pro—and the ECW TV belt. He barely made it back to the dressing room without collapsing.

Since that day, Mikey's life has been what he calls "a living hell."

"I think every wrestler in ECW wants to kill me," he said. "Three days after I won the belt, I started getting these weird phone calls in the middle of the night. I'd pick up the phone and the person would say, 'Mikey, we're gonna get you' or 'Mikey, watch yourself tomorrow' and then hang up.

"I think I know which guys did it, but I don't want to get them any more mad at me than they are now. I've already had my phone number changed three times, but the calls don't stop. Most nights, I can't even eat or sleep. Sometimes I just go out and take long drives, but every time I see a car behind me, I start thinking it's one of the ECW guys following me."

Surprisingly, Mikey's title reign includes a long string of victories over top-notch competition. He's beaten Pit Bull, The Rockin' Rebel, Mr. Hughes, Kevin Sullivan, 911, and Public Enemy's Johnny Grunge.

There is, however, a catch. All those wins came by disqualification. It seems his opponents don't just want to beat Mikey, they want to maim him.

Mikey still gets crushed in just about every match. But he wins the matches because his foes usually get disgusted when the referee insists they pin Mikey. Instead of directing their fury solely at their frail opponent, they'll attack the official and get disqualified.

"He's like the scrawny kid we all liked to beat up in school," said 911. "Once you start beatin' on him, you can't stop. Then when the stupid referee gets involved, it's like when the teacher broke up your fights in school. You just get madder and madder."

Mikey thought he figured out a way to escape his championship predicament.

"It was great having this belt for a little while and hearing fans chant my name," he said, "but my safety is at stake here. So my plan was to just hand the belt to one of my challengers, you know, just let him have it, no questions asked. They wouldn't have to worry about me anymore.

"I tried it with Mr. Hughes and the others, but they wouldn't take it. I don't understand. I was admitting that they were better than me. It isn't fair. I love wrestling, but I shouldn't have to hold a title if I don't want to."

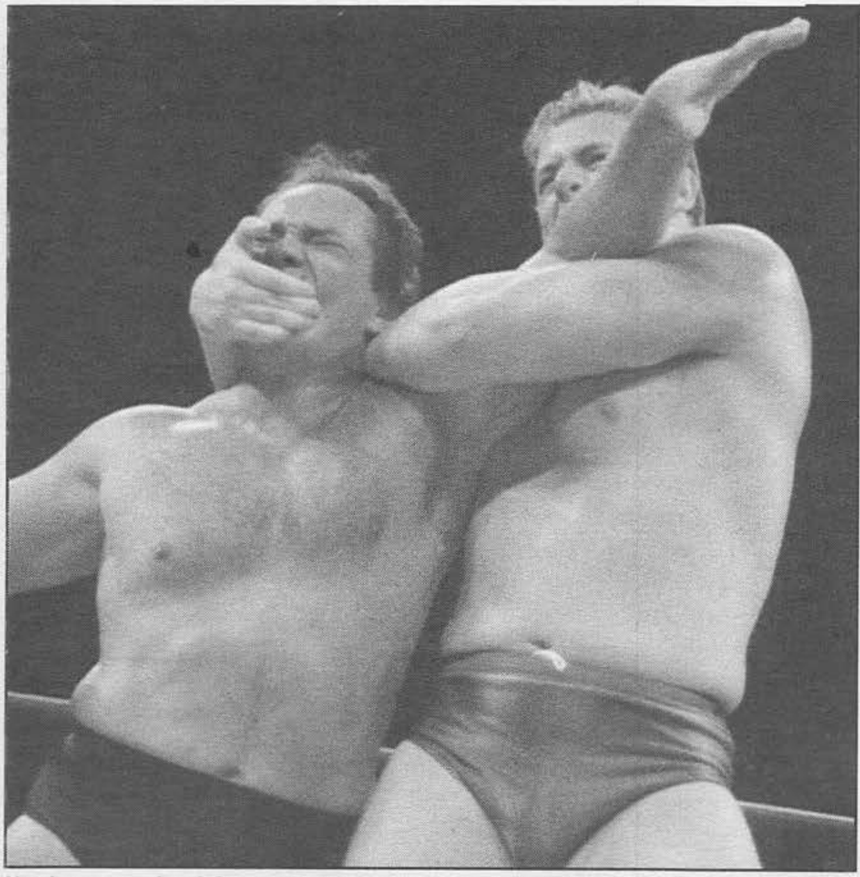
Such is the troubled life of a wrestling champion. Until Mikey is lucky enough to lose his title, he will have to deal with his newfound fame and all the problems that go with it. He's even working on some genuine wrestling moves to go with the eye pokes and nose tweaks that he frequently uses.

"I'm working on a bodyslam, but everybody I get in the ring with is so heavy and tough to lift," he said. "Maybe I'll try an armbar or something."

Poor Mikey. He's haunted by his own success. □

Q&A

Each month, *The Wrestler* will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost in fans' minds



Not long ago, Lord Steven Regal had nothing but disdain for American wrestling fans. These days, he reserves those feelings for rivals like Larry Zbyszko.

Q: Lord Steven, I've noticed recently that …

A: Before we begin, I'd just like to congratulate the fine United States football team on its outstanding performance in the World Cup.

Q: I can't believe I'm hearing this. You want to congratulate the U.S. soccer team?

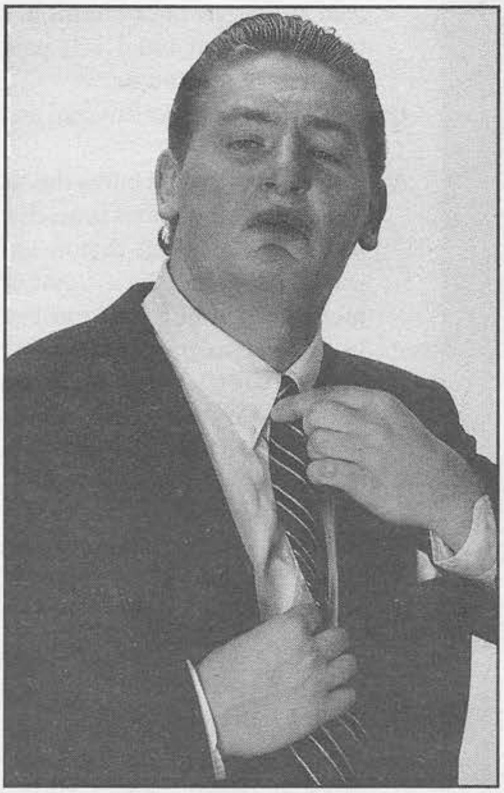
A: It's football in my country, mate, because it's played with the feet, not like your American football, or what we call gridiron, which is played with the hands. Funny sport. I never did understand it.

Q: I'm not sure I understand this …

A: I'm especially proud of the fine American player John Harkes. You know, he and I have a lot in common.

Q: Such as?

A: He is the best footballer in America, but because the quality of play here is, shall we say,



LORD STEVEN REGAL

SINCE HIS ARRIVAL in WCW last year, Lord Steven Regal has ranked among the most disliked wrestlers in North America. Aided by Sir William, Regal claimed to be the world's premier scientific wrestler. He backed it up when he won the WCW TV title from Rick Steamboat on September 19 in Houston.

Regal's behavior stirred unusual feelings in American wrestling fans. You see, the U.S. and England have been allies for most of the past two centuries. We have fought together in wars and cooperated in settling international crises. Regal rekindled an enmity that hadn't existed since the War of 1812.

Sir William constantly interfered and Regal took a stranglehold on the TV title. But then something incredible happened: Larry Zbyszko, who hadn't wrestled in years, came out of retirement and faced Regal at Slamboree '94. A week later, Zbyszko won the TV title from Regal.

It was a major embarrassment for Regal. And perhaps it made him clean up his act. Because at Clash of the Champions XXVII in Charleston, South Carolina, Regal wrestled a clean match and regained the belt from Zbyszko.

Are we seeing a new Regal? Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum gained some insight when he sat down with Regal over lunch of fish and chips and pale ale.

subpar, he is forced to play in England. I am the greatest wrestler in Great Britain and I wrestle in America. Interesting irony, wouldn't you say?

Q: I guess so. Did you actually root for the U.S. in the World Cup?

A: **Not exactly root. I root for only one country, and that is England. Unfortunately, they were knocked out in the qualifying round and did not make it to the final 24 this time around. Too bad.**

Q: Yes. We missed their hooligans.

A: **Let me remind you there are many football fans in England who are not of common stock. I am one of those. I watch because I enjoy the game, and the U.S. gave us many inspirational moments.**

Q: Do you see any similarities between yourself and the U.S. team?

A: **That's impossible. They are a team. I'm an individual. And there are no similarities anyway. They were underdogs, while my ability is known throughout the world. I am never an underdog.**

Q: Although some people saw it that way when you wrestled Zbyszko at Clash of the Champions XXVII. You didn't?

A: **Not at all. Zbyszko ran out of gas a long time previously. He had nowhere to go but down because there was nothing fueling him anymore. He realized his perceptions about me were dead wrong.**

Q: Wrong? In what way?

A: **He thought I was arrogant, then he saw firsthand that I have the ability to back up my claims. He thought Sir William would interfere in every one of my matches, but that didn't happen. He was under orders not to. He thought I was nothing. Now he knows I am something.**

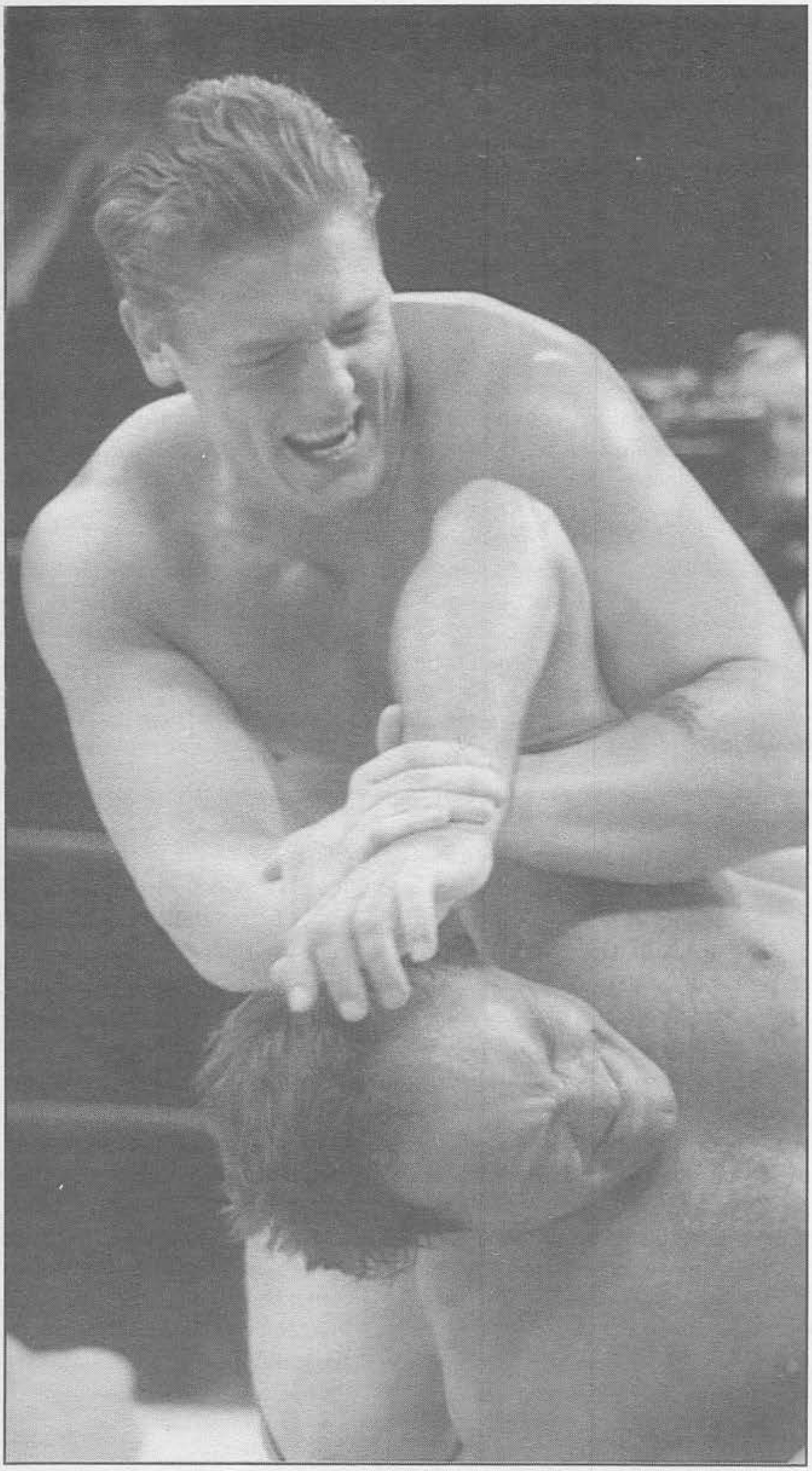
Q: Which is?

A: **The WCW TV champion with much better things ahead. I tell you, my dear Mr. Rosenbaum, this is only the beginning. I plan on a long stay in this country. I'm starting to enjoy it here. You know, at first your customs seemed a little strange. When I first saw Americans eating in those fast-food restaurants, they reminded me of hungry dogs. Always stuffing food down their throats and never bothering to chew. Hardly bothering to swallow, come to think of it. Now I see it differently. Americans are driven. They don't have time to waste.**

Q: So you've learned some things. Did you learn anything from your feud with Zbyszko?

A: **Feud is an ugly word. And, no, I learned absolutely nothing from Zbyszko.**

Q: Nothing? Not even humility?



Regal—one of the world's best technical wrestlers—has always enjoyed taking part in a good scientific match. But lately, he's beginning to like life on the American side of "the pond."

A: Nothing. Well, maybe one thing.

Q: What's that? I'm almost afraid to ask.

A: Don't be. I learned that every dog has his day. Never underestimate an old man. He had a goal and he set out to fulfill it. I underestimated and dearly paid the price. Unfortunate.

Q: So you don't respect Zbyszko as a wrestler?

A: Not at all. His style bores me, as it does just about everyone else. And I find it strange that he has suddenly become the dictator of morals when he spent most of his career as one of the most hateful wrestlers in American ring history. By golly, he's nothing but a hypocrite. What did he ever win?

Q: Several major titles. An AWA World title. He's a pretty accomplished wrestler.

A: Was, the key word is "was." What you all witnessed was Larry Zbyszko's last stand. I think I retired him forever.

Q: I wouldn't bet on that, not with Zbyszko. He's not one to talk and then not back it up with action. But how about you? Strange things have been happening. Over in Japan, you teamed with 2 Cold Scorpio. Sir William hasn't been interfering in your matches ...

A: That's another misconception. Sir William never interfered in my matches. He just lent a helping hand, as managers are supposed to do. That's what I pay him for. If I needed somebody to carry my bags, I'd hire a valet. If I require theater tickets on the road, I see the concierge. Sir William is there for a reason.

Q: But wouldn't you agree that he hasn't been there as often recently?

A: It depends on how you perceive it. He's always there for me. We constantly discuss strategy. He's always with me in the gym. His help at ringside isn't as necessary as it once was because I've become acclimated. The situation has changed.

Q: And teaming with Scorpio?

A: Out of necessity. You know, there's a strange thing about

you Americans. You have this unusual idea of teammanship. Look at the great football teams in the world. Teammates hate each other. They hate their coaches. Yet, they get along because they all have one goal: winning. Chemistry doesn't mean liking your teammates. It means being able to work with them. I worked very well with Mr. Scorpio and look forward to doing it again.**

Q: Perhaps I'm trying for too much here, but what do you think about the fans?

A: You mean the fans who attend matches or the fans who stay home?

Q: Is there a difference?

A: Yes. The fans who attend matches tend to be louts. They misbehave and throw things. They either have no respect for the sport or no respect for themselves. Perhaps both. The fans who stay home are much more enthusiastic. They write me letters and most of them are very favorable. In fact, I believe many of them read your periodicals.

Q: So you're saying not all American fans are alike.

A: Not at all. They've very different. But they're also very unlike British sports fans.

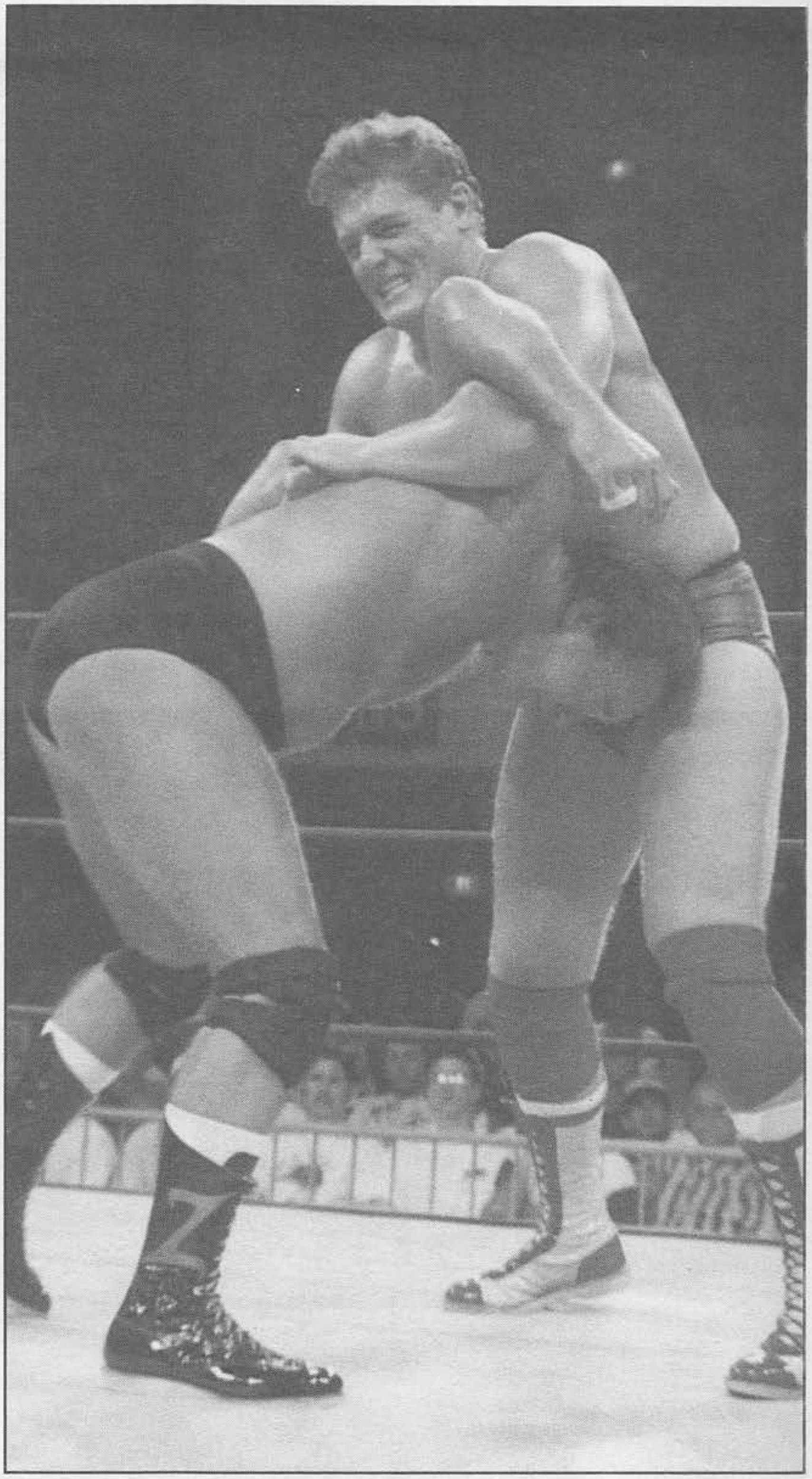
Q: How is that?

A: British sports fans take their teams and favorite athletes more to heart. They live and die with their athletes. Take me, for instance. I am a national hero in England. Very few people in America consider Ric Flair to be a national hero. For good reason.

Q: What reason?

A: He takes every shortcut imaginable. He never heard of working hard to achieve one's goals. He'd rather cheat.

Q: I can't believe I'm hearing this .



Regal maneuvers Zbyszko into position for a double-underhook suplex. The scientific master has had a rather confusing change in attitude recently.

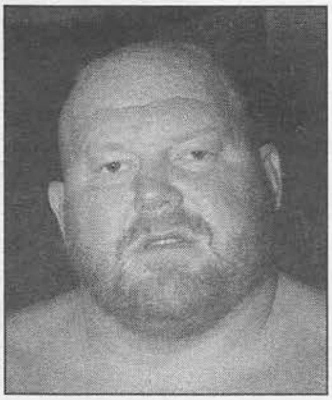
A: Why not? I am the world's greatest scientific wrestler, with the exception of no one. I have no reason to cheat, now do I?

Q: Waiter, I'd like another ale if you don't mind.

A: Make that two. □

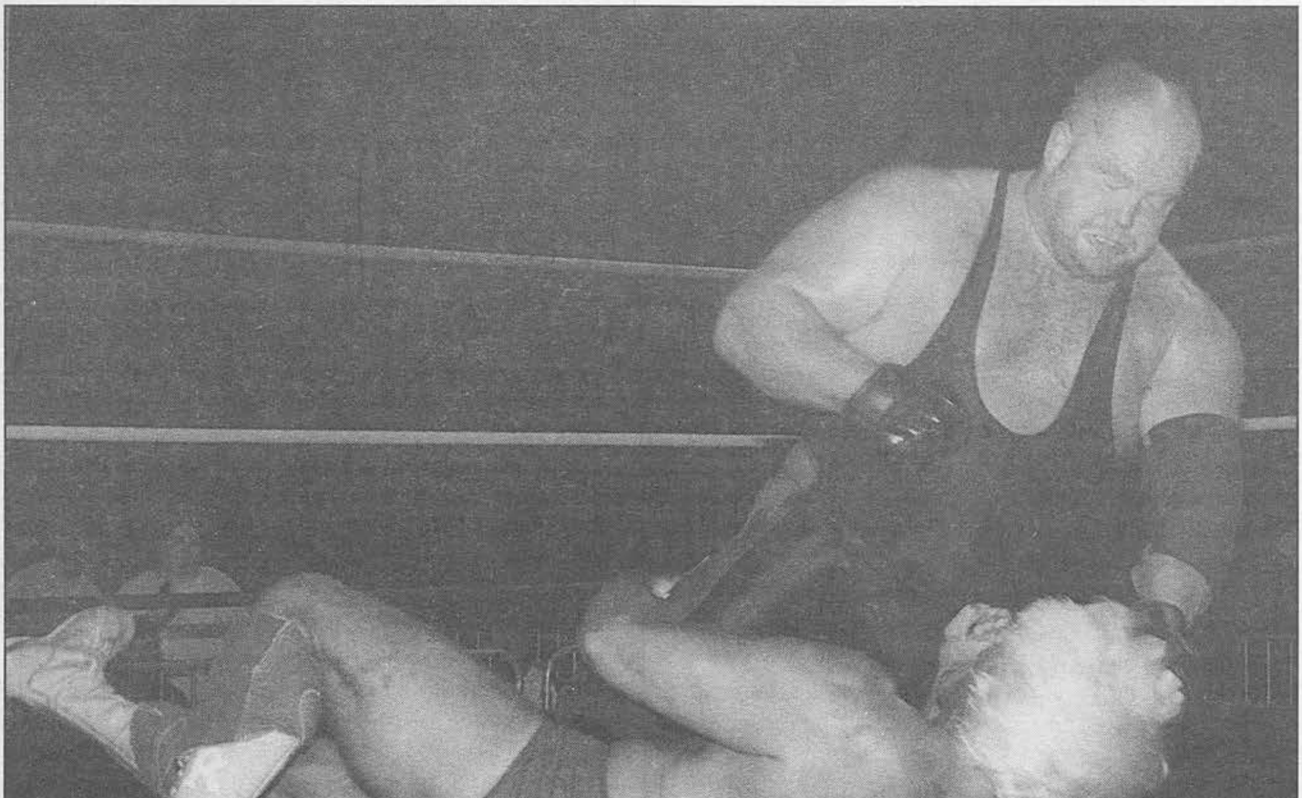
X-RAY

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES



BIG VAN VADER

Each month THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts will offer their candid opinions of one of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming youngster or an established superstar in his own right, our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Many consider Big Van Vader (pounding Ric Flair) to be the world's premier super heavyweight. He combines unparalleled viciousness with remarkable agility for someone his size.

CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"The Captain knows that size means a lot in wrestling. Vader makes the most of that 450-pound frame. I'm glad I don't have to step into the ring with him—before or after my diet. He's won all over the world, and I'm sure he'll keep on winning. Why? Because he's so strong and tough to keep down. The man is not invincible, but it takes an incredible effort to beat him. With enough title shots, daddy, he'll wear down and beat any champion, no matter how good!"

Capt. Lou Albano has led 13 teams—most recently The Headshrinkers—to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.

KILLER KOWALSKI

"Intimidation. That's the first word that comes to my mind when you ask me about Vader. He wins a lot of matches before the bell ever rings. Most guys he faces psych themselves out before the match starts. They see that look in his eyes. They hear about the men he's crippled. That puts the fear into them. If they're afraid, they're not wrestling at their best. Then Vader has them where he wants them and can move in for the kill. It's a major part of his success."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.

DORY FUNK JR.

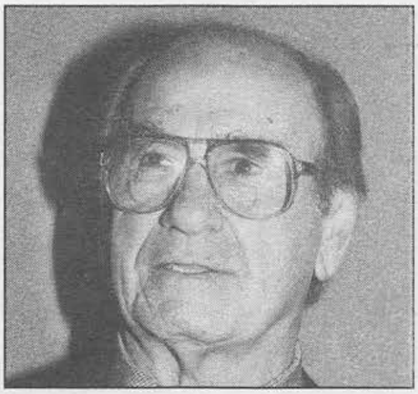
"I have a hard time figuring out why Vader's been struggling. Perhaps the competition is catching up to him, though I can't think of any super heavyweight who combines strength and incredible agility the way he does. Here's a guy with a devastating power bomb *and* a terrific moonsault. He could be becoming a bit too predictable, however. He could add some new moves and holds to his repertoire. He and Harley Race should address this soon."

Dory Funk Jr. held the NWA World championship from 1969 to 1973. He still wrestles from time to time.

FABULOUS MOOLAH

"Hon, it doesn't take a genius to figure out Vader is successful because he is brutal and will do whatever it takes to win. That's how he should approach each match. He oughta just pound his opponents into the mat. I like his moonsaults, but he should leave them to the little guys. Those moves get him into more trouble than they're worth. If he wants his place among the all-time greats, he should just rely on power. When he's on his game, no one's better."

Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.



LOU THESZ

"Big Van Vader is too good to have gone this long without regaining the title. He's at that point where he *must* show he can bounce back from defeat. It's imperative he do that soon, and I think he will. It might be good for him and Harley Race to part ways, or maybe have Race play a less visible role. Race is a real knowledgeable guy, but Vader relies on his interference too often. That's a bad sign. If he keeps working hard, he'll get more world titles."

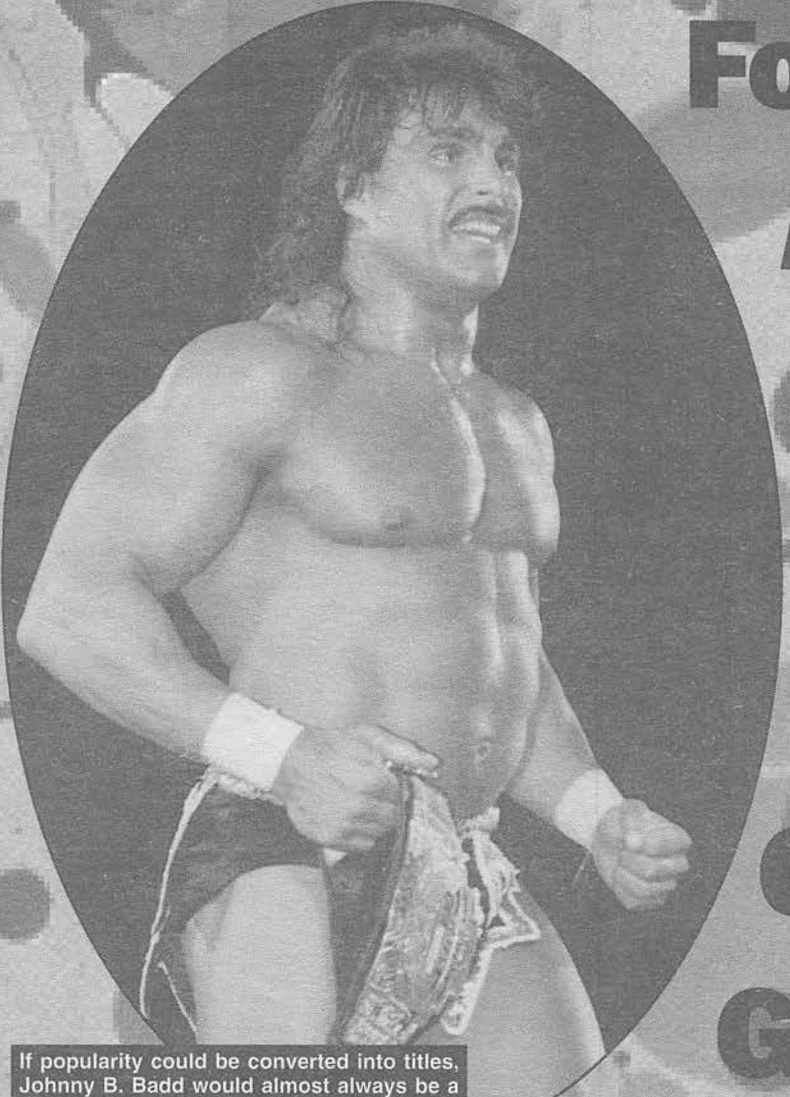
Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-around wrestler ever.

GORDON SOLIE

"Vader is, indeed, one of those rare competitors whom the fans do not like at all, yet love to watch. It would be exceedingly difficult for me to criticize him for not taking to the fans, since he did win three WCW World titles without them. However, I do find myself wondering what Vader would be like as a fan favorite. For as brutal as he is, if he had thousands of people behind him every night, he'd be that much more difficult to beat."

Gordon Solie has expertly analyzed pro wrestling on television for 35 years. He periodically appears on WCW broadcasts.

Johnny Be Too Nice: For *Badd* To Be *Good,* He's Gotta Get *Mad!*



If popularity could be converted into titles, Johnny B. Badd would almost always be a champion. He got to hold the belt after a controversial pin of Steve Austin at Clash of the Champions—but not for long.

Despite his name, Johnny B. Badd is one of the nicest guys in wrestling. It's made him popular with the fans, but hasn't won him any major titles. We're certain that for Badd, a little bit of nastiness would go a long way

By Andy Rodriguez

JOHNNY B. BADD wanted the U.S. title. Really, he did.

"I went into that match like it was the most important in my career," Badd said sincerely. "I prepared as best I could. I trained hard. I was ready that night. Truly ready. And at the end of the night, I believed all that preparation had paid off."

The flamboyant Johnny B. is referring to his bout against U.S. champion "Stunning" Steve Austin at Clash of the Champions in Charleston, South Carolina. Indeed, Badd proved he had prepared. He contested a fine match against the champ. Austin is one of the sport's outstanding young grapplers, and Badd matched him hold-for-hold.

Of course, Austin also is one of the most practiced rulebreakers around. To get himself out of a tight spot, Austin pulled a foreign object out of his tights and used it to slug Badd. Johnny went down. Austin pinned him to retain the title.

Or so it seemed. The champion was celebrating victory when referee Randy Anderson, who was not working the bout, alerted the match ref, Nick Patrick, to what Austin had done. As Patrick questioned Austin, Badd snuck up from behind and rolled him up his rival in a pinning position. Then, amazingly, referee Anderson counted a pin. Badd left the ring with the U.S. title belt as Austin protested vociferously.

A couple of days later the belt was returned to Austin. It was a proper decision because Anderson should never have given the three-count. Anderson later claimed he mistakenly believed Patrick had restarted the match, but even if he had, Anderson had no good reason to take over the officiating from the original ref. The final decision: Badd, winner by disqualification; Austin, still champion.

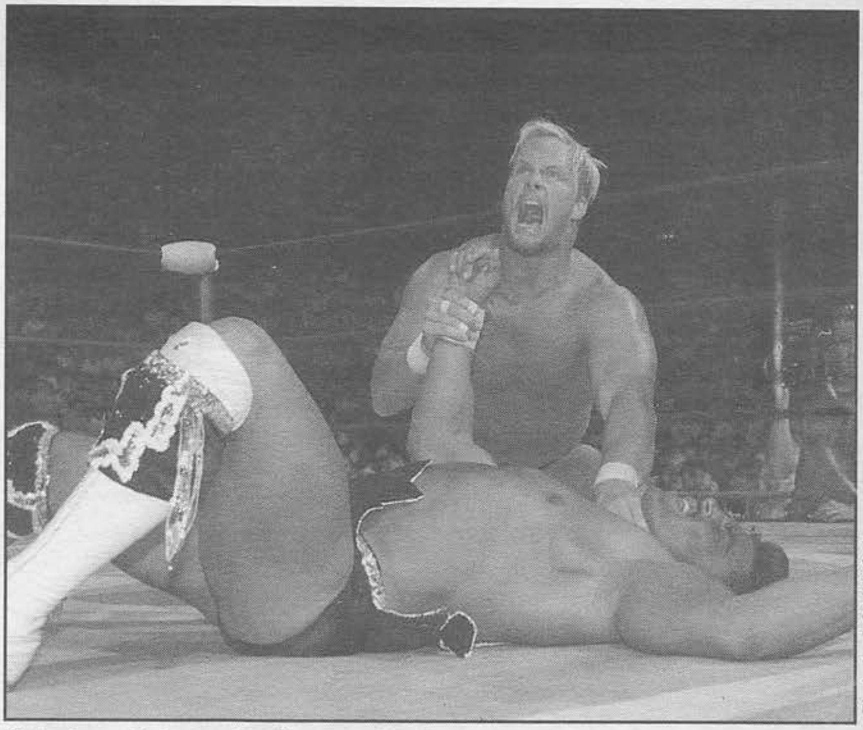


Photo by J. Stoll/WCW

Nobody wants to see Badd use tactics like Austin, but a more aggressive nature could take him to a new level of success.

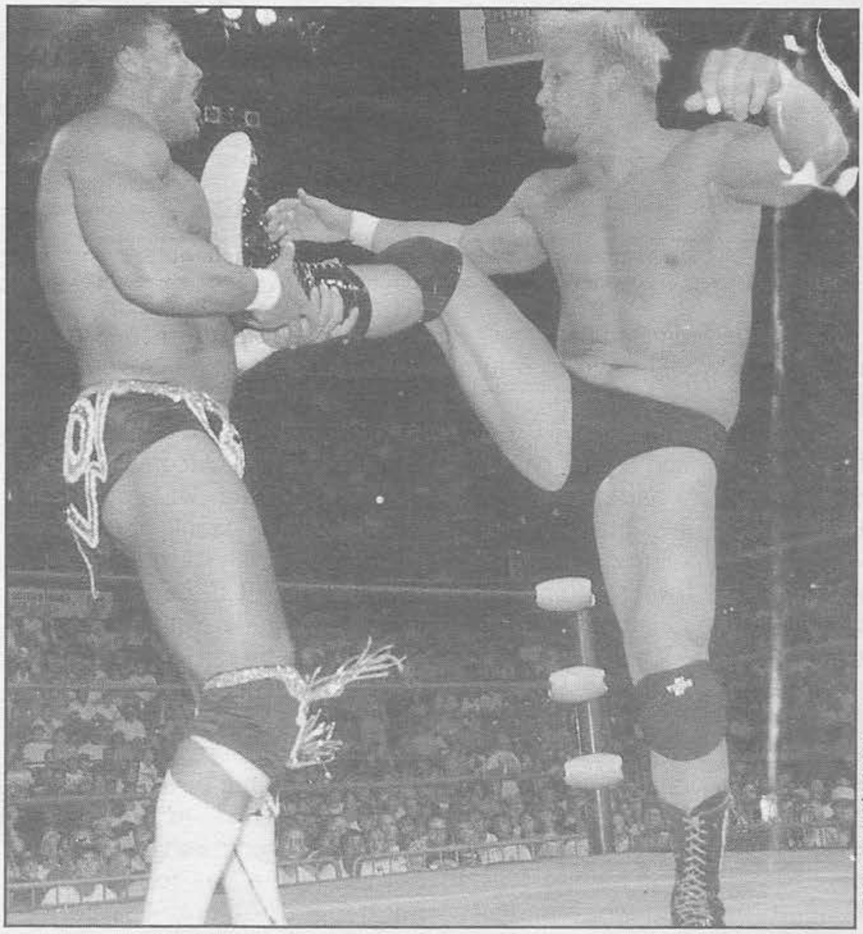


Photo by J. Stoll/WCW

Badd may be the flamboyant sort, but his wrestling must be taken seriously. He successfully blunts Austin's kick to his chest.

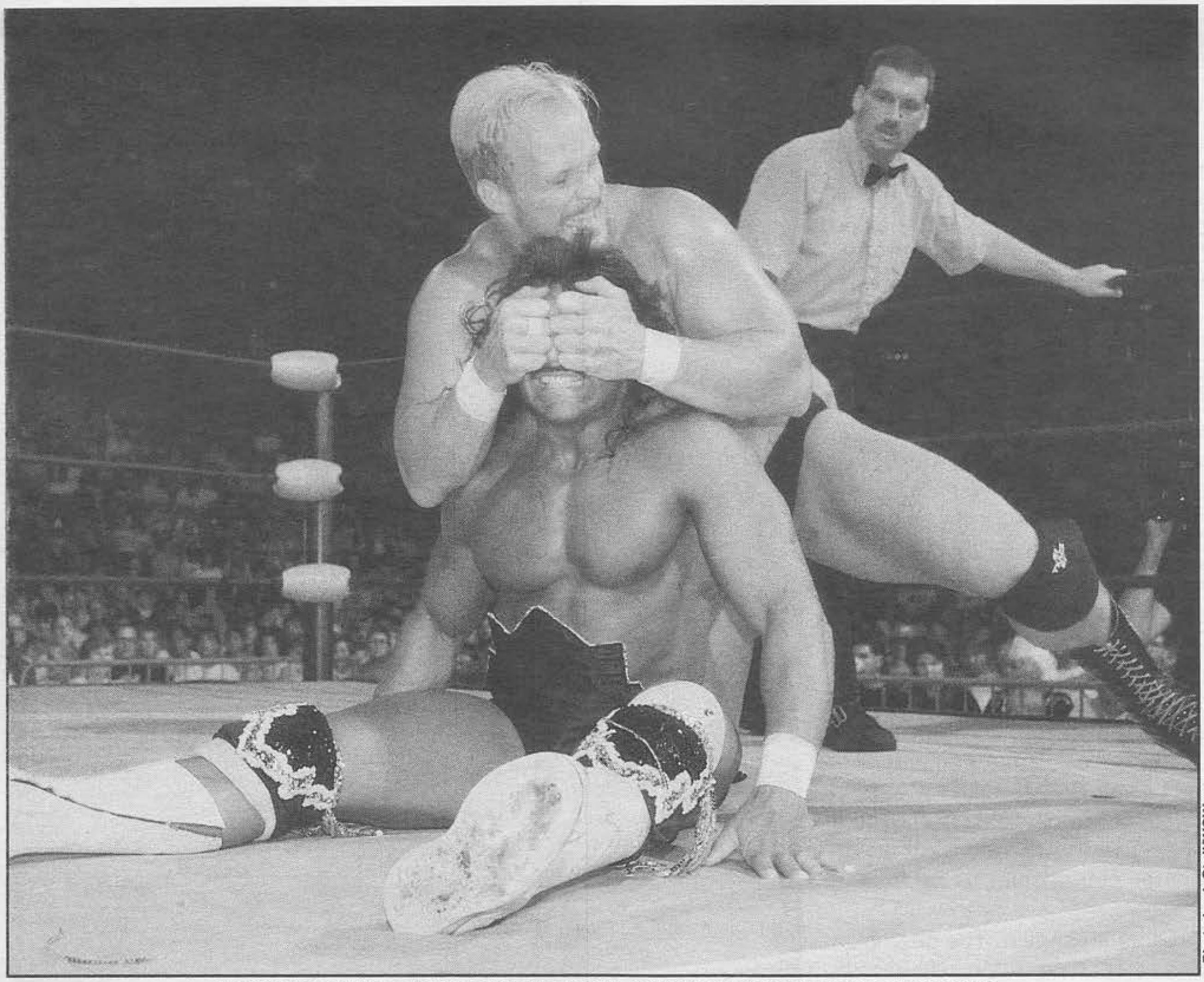


Photo by J. Stoll/WCW

Austin has a big surprise awaiting Badd, but it's anything but a treat. The U.S. champion has a hidden foreign object, and he's ready to use it on Badd.

Badd later admitted he knew he most likely would have to return the belt.

"But for a while there, I really felt like the United States champion," he said. "I had pinned Austin's shoulders to the mat and I was the *man*! The people were cheering and I was on top of the world! Can you blame me for getting excited about that?"

No, we can't blame Badd for that. Everybody wants to be the champ. However, we can blame him for accepting the results of an obviously bogus three-count. He knew he hadn't won the title, but he acted as though he had. It was beneath the man who conducts himself so honorably.

Badd is too good to win big matches solely on controversy. He has the ability to defeat the sport's top competitors and leave no doubt about the outcome. Anyone who's ever been walloped by a Badd right hand would agree.

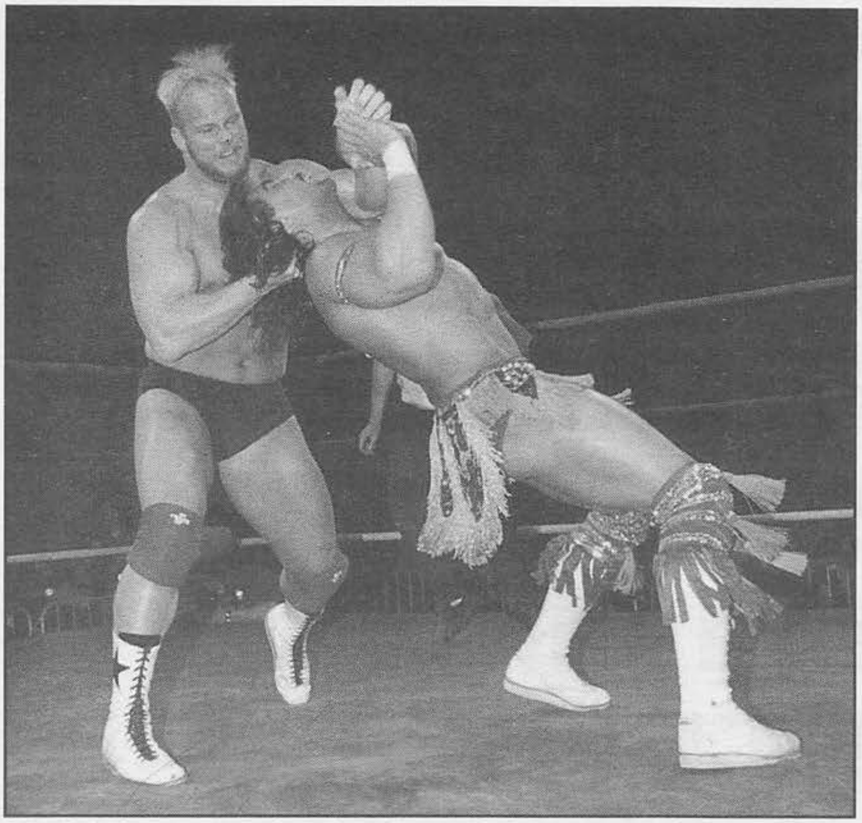
Johnny B. isn't a major WCW titleholder yet because of one thing: his attitude. Simply put, he's too nice a guy. He has to get tough, has to get mean. He has to get, well, Badd!

"I've seen Badd get riled up at an opponent, but never on a consistent basis," noted WCW announcer Tony Schiavone, "I'm not saying he has to become a full-fledged rulebreaker, but he has to realize there are guys out there who want to tear his head off, and he has to respond in kind."

Badd's friend Sting says "Johnny still goes into the majority of his matches expecting to wrestle. Sure, he hates some of those guys as much as the rest of us do, but he's more willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. He needs to take the initiative and snap at them first. Strike first and you've won half the battle."

Not only does Badd not get mean often enough, he actually has fun in the ring. Will having fun win titles? No, says Harley Race.

"There's a guy with a lot of talent," Race offered, "but who can take him seriously, the way he



If Badd had even some of Austin's killer instinct and capacity for meanness, he probably would be a champion. Johnny needs to get riled up on a regular basis.

prances into the ring with those sequined outfits? Then he showers the fans with confetti with that silly pop gun, or whatever it is. You'd never catch me dead doing that, and if any of my men tried it, I'd wring their necks!"

The gruff manager doesn't appreciate Badd's antics, and frankly, we're growing tired of them. Race is right—Badd doesn't need all that flash and glitter. Maybe some less flamboyant attire would put him in a more serious, maybe even a nastier, mood.

"Johnny should take off some of that makeup, too," Jesse Ventura suggested, half-kiddingly. "With all that mascara on his face, he can't work up a convincing scowl. To be mad, first you have to look mad."

There are people in WCW who think Badd doesn't need to change at all. Most of them are enemies.

"Lighten up on the poor commoner," TV champion Lord Steven Regal said sarcastically. "He's fine just the way he is. As far as I'm concerned, his attitude couldn't be better. It fits him perfectly."

While Badd admits that such comments serve to inspire him, he will not concede he needs to change his ways.

"You can't convince me I'm doing anything wrong right now," he said. "I like to have fun. So what? I'm wrestling better than I ever have and I'm hot in contention for the U.S. title. Just because I haven't won it yet doesn't mean there's a problem."

We respectfully disagree, and think there is a problem. It is this: The longer Badd goes without winning a big title, the further he drops out of contention. He is an athlete in his prime. His time to win is now. His opportunity has arrived, and he's not taking advantage of it.

Get mad, Johnny! □

Always a bridesmaid, never a bride. That's the story of Badd in WCW. On its European tour earlier this year, he almost beat World champion Ric Flair.

Great Action In Global!

THE HEART OF TEXAS WRESTLING IS STILL BEATING-WITH A VENGEANCE!

Action Jackson the unlucky victim of a three-pronged assault in Global action at the Sportatorium. Moadib and Baboose the Witch Doctor hold his arms, while Iceman Parsons works on him from behind.

By Eddie Ellner

THE CROWD AT the Sportatorium rose to its feet. Even The Freebirds, waiting for their match in the dressing room, wandered into the stands for a peek. Inside the ring, muscleman Scott Putski lifted Moadib over his head and tossed him three rows deep into the stands.

It's been a while since wrestling in Texas has had a high national profile. But new faces and old faces are putting the Lone Star State back on the mat map in a big, Texan way

There are three things right with this picture:

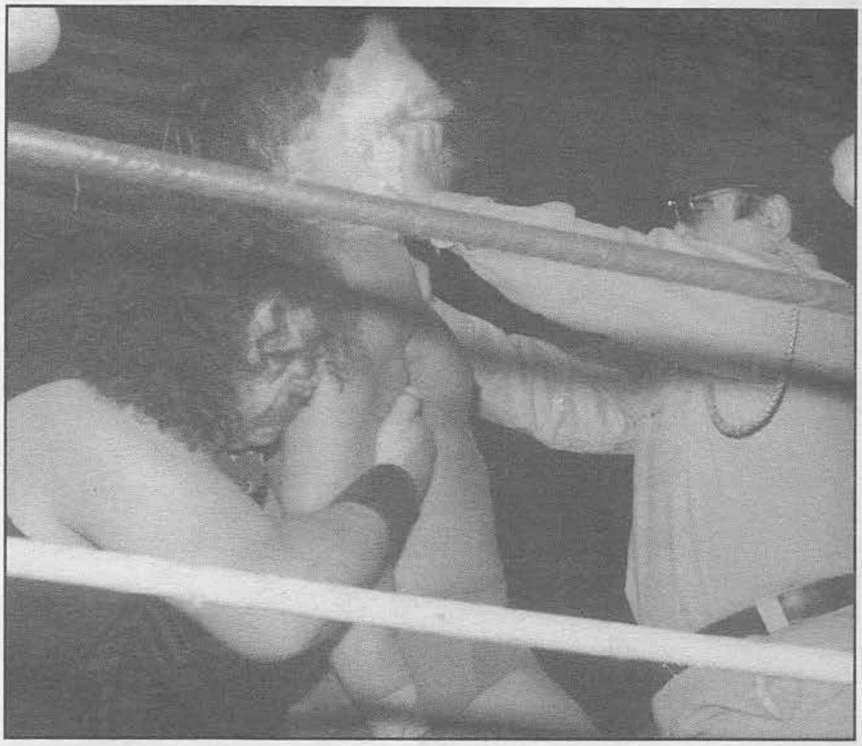
1. There was a crowd at the Sportatorium—in fact, the venerable Dallas arena was only 178 fans short of capacity.

2. There was something to cheer about. After years of ring anarchy and soap opera-ish feuding, some bona fide young stars like Putski, John Hawk, and Rod Price are giving fans reason to smile.

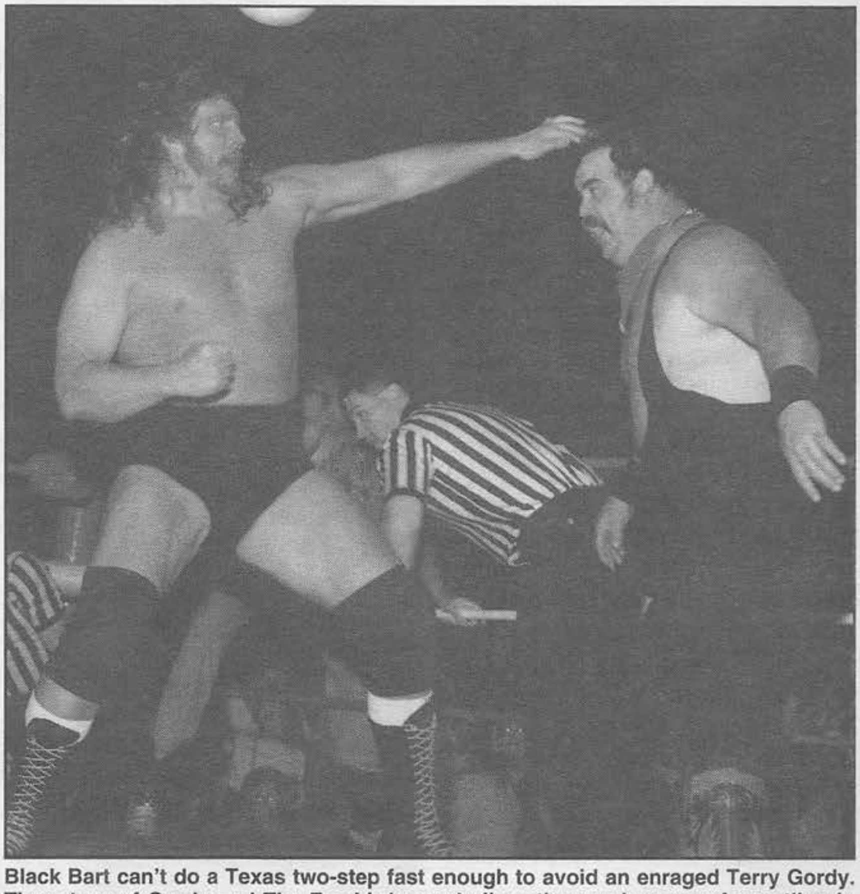
3. The Freebirds are back in Texas, and more than anything signify the region is ripe for a long-awaited comeback.

"We're not here to watch the grass grow," says Terry Gordy. "If the wrestling wasn't top notch, we wouldn't be here."

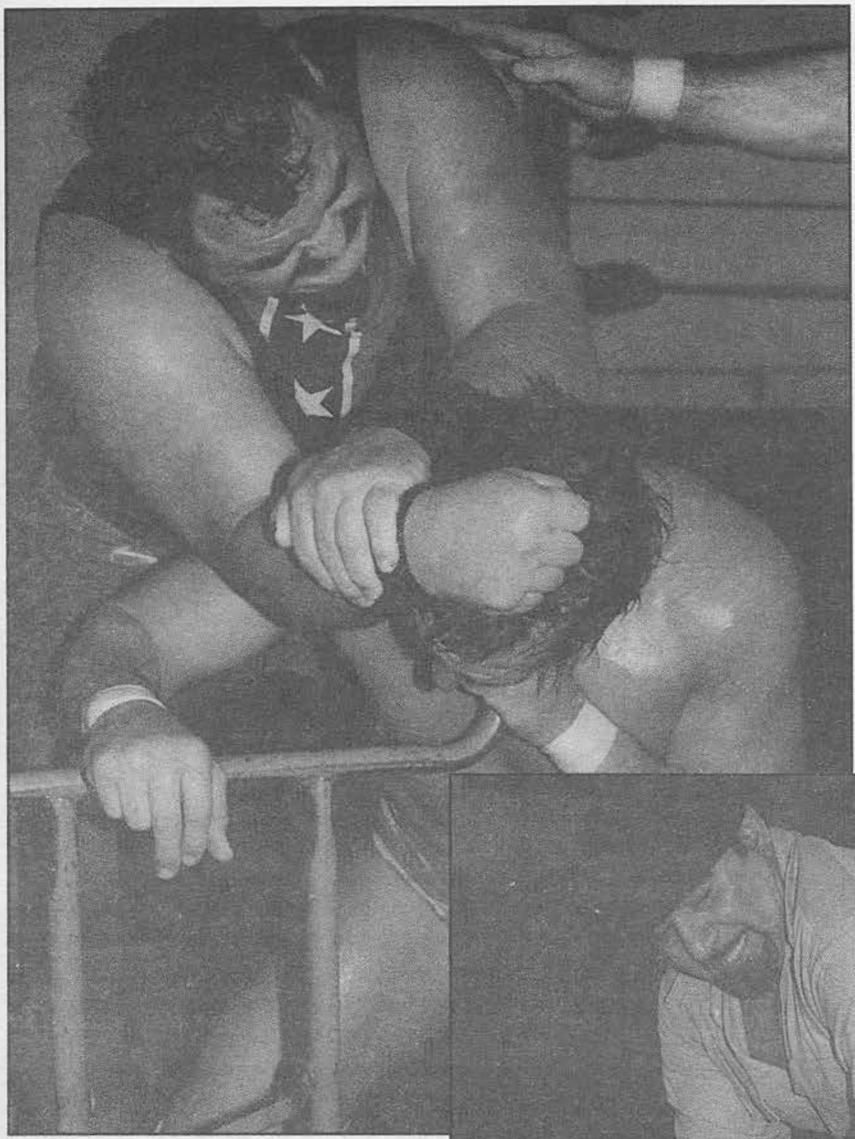
Yes, Texas wrestling is back.

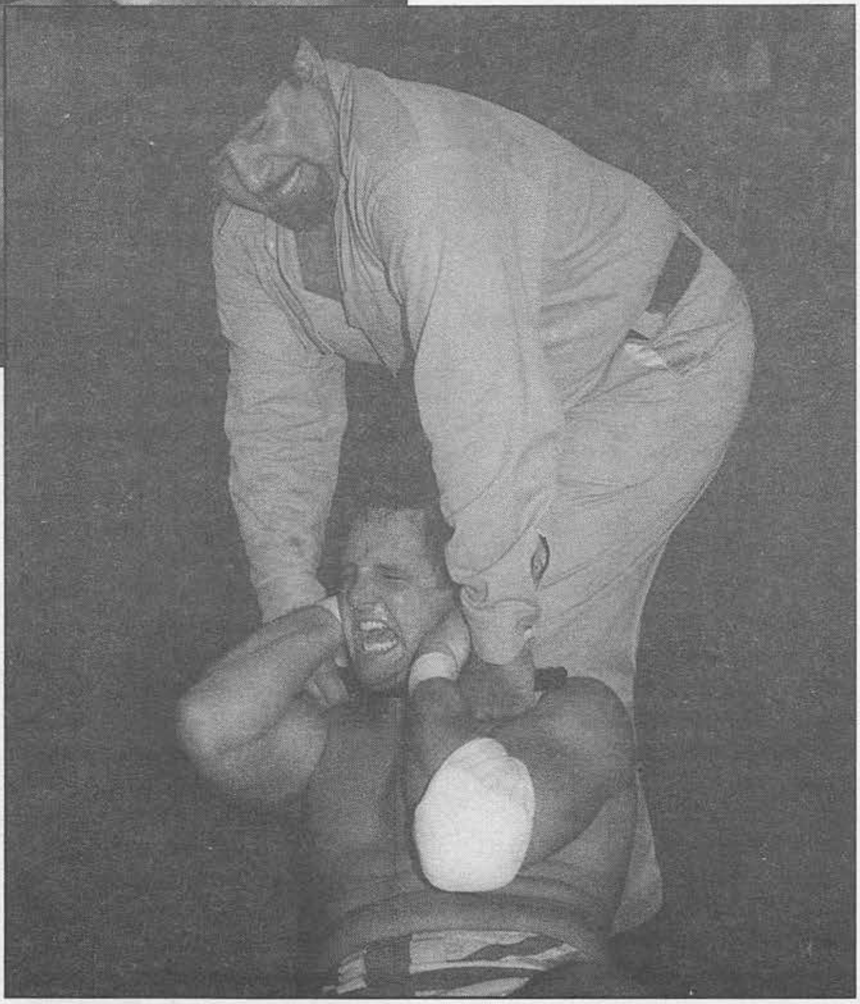


It gets hot in Texas, but Gen. Skandor Akbar is only making things worse for poor Marc Valiant. Black Bart, who's helping make it all possible, wisely shields himself from the flames during the attack.



Black Bart can't do a Texas two-step fast enough to avoid an enraged Terry Gordy. The return of Gordy and The Freebirds symbolizes the renaissance of wrestling in the Lone Star State.





Popular Chris Adams is one of the wrestlers who experienced the mid-1980s glory days of Texas wrestling, then lived through the recent down period. He attempts to survive assaults from Bart (above) and Akbar (right).

Already, a series of potent cards have fans hoping for a return of the glory days, when it seemed like every superstar passed through the Lone Star State.

"People are silly that way," Michael Hayes says. "They're always talking about the good ol' days as if they were any better than today. Hell, back then we were all younger and prettier, but it's a waste of time 'cause it ain't ever going to be the same. The important thing is to appreciate what you have now."

Putski is very much part of the rebuilding process. "It's like muscle," says the Polish strongman, whose father Ivan was for years one of the world's most popular wrestlers. "You build it up, it wears down, you build it up. I am proud to be a part of a great tradition both in my family and here in Texas."

Over the last decade, Chris Adams has lived through the highs and lows that came with the territory. A new generation of wrestling fans don't even remember the tumultuous battles and reconciliations Adams had with the Von Erichs. Which is how Chris would prefer it remained.

"What's the point?" he asks. "With Skandor Akbar and Moadib

out for my hide, I can't afford to dwell on the past. When I retire and reflect upon my career, there'll be plenty of time to piece together the good and bad memories. I'm interested in the here and now."

That most of the wrestlers emphasize the future is no mystery. The Von Erich legacy of triumph and tragedy is never more than a memory away. Emblazoned on T-shirts and programs, the faces of Mike, Kerry, David, and Chris evoke sadness, grief, and frustration. Hayes is the most eloquent on the subject.

"We're not getting any of those boys back," he says. "Let's honor their memory by giving our best effort whenever we're back here."

"The fans have been on an emotional rollercoaster for a long time," says Price, a former Global Wrestling Federation champion. "If we can give them something to cheer about it, they'll keep coming."

Price has done just that. The young wrestler reminds many fans of a young David Von Erich. "I'm honored by the comparison, but I'm very much my own man," he says. "I want to put my own stamp on the region."

"There's no question wrestling fans around here have been through hell," says Hayes. "I don't blame them for not coming to the matches. We couldn't even come here for a while. The Freebirds and the Von Erichs had some memorable tussles ... the memories were too much to bear. But no one wants to mourn forever. It's time to kick some butt again."

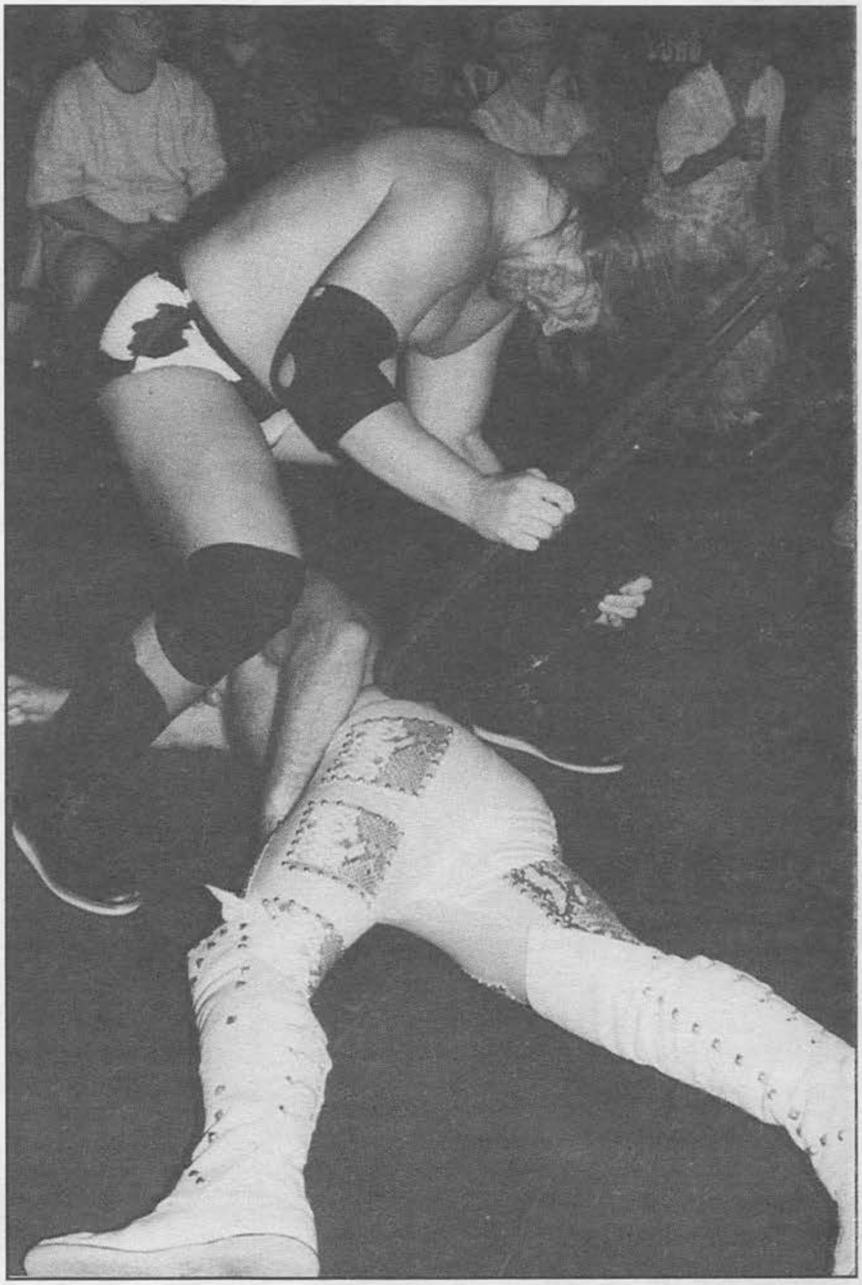
Even Akbar, moved as he was by the family tragedy, recognizes the need to push on. "Let the dead rest in peace," he says. "I have sympathy and compassion for all sufferers out of the ring. Inside the ring I have none. When I'm through with Chris Adams, I will pray for his soul, too."

"Akbar hasn't changed much over the years," Adams says. "And I take that personally."

With a strong talent base, stimulating feuds, and positive fan reaction, don't be surprised to find many other superstars beating a path through Texas.

"First it was the Cowboys, then the Rockets," says Hayes, referring to the NFL and NBA champions. "Now it's time for wrestling to capture the headlines. Next year Texas'll bring home the Stanley Cup and the World Series—Rangers vs. Astros, you heard it here first!—and The Freebirds will leave with some title gold. And you're all invited to the party. I'll rent out The Ballpark in Arlington [the Rangers' new stadium], and even supply the chili."

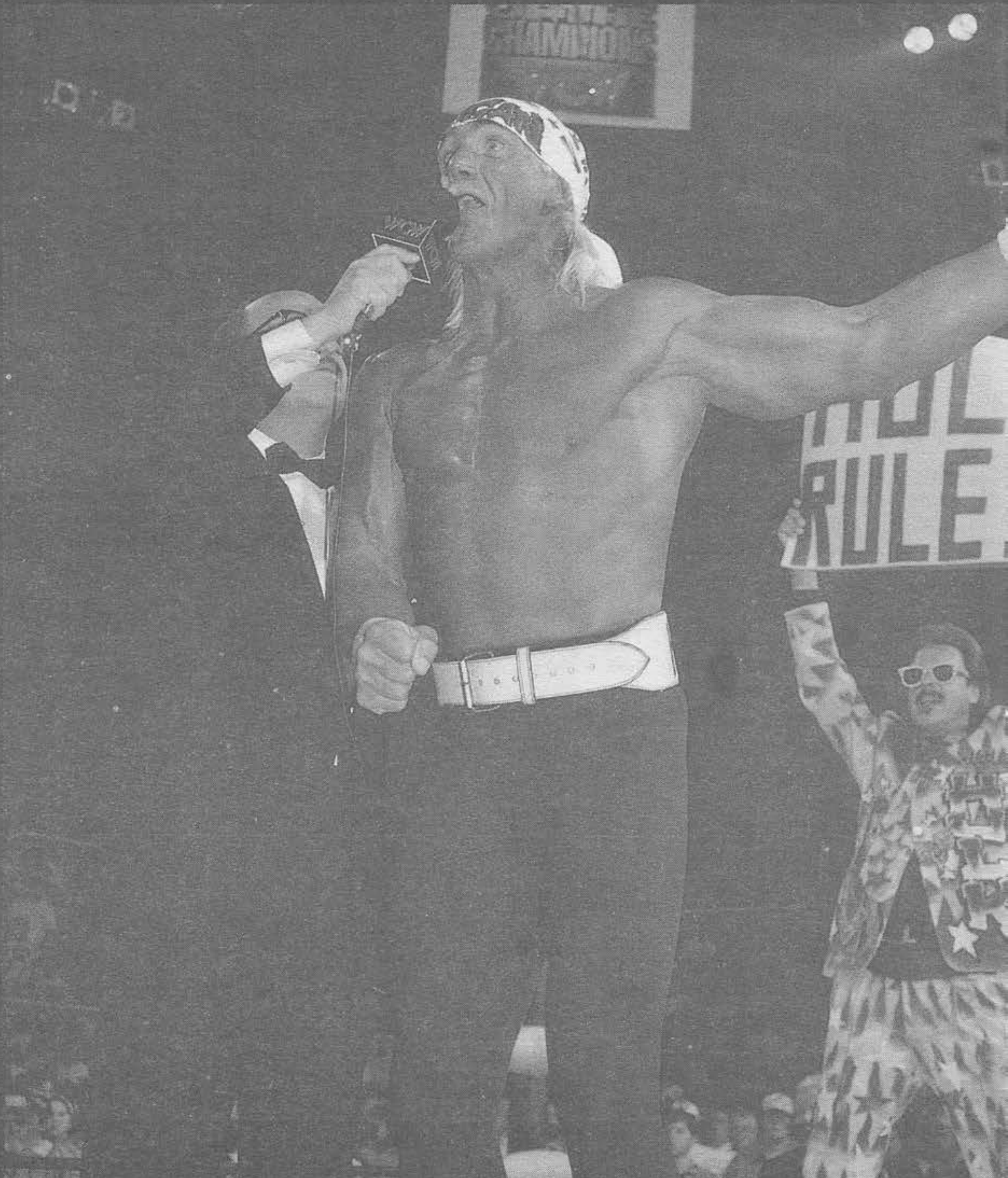
Now that's something to cheer about. □



One reason for optimism in Texas wrestling is the rise of new stars such as John Hawk (attacking Jim Garvin with a chair). He and Scott Putski are among the young matmen clicking with Lone Star fans.

Hogan's New Commandments

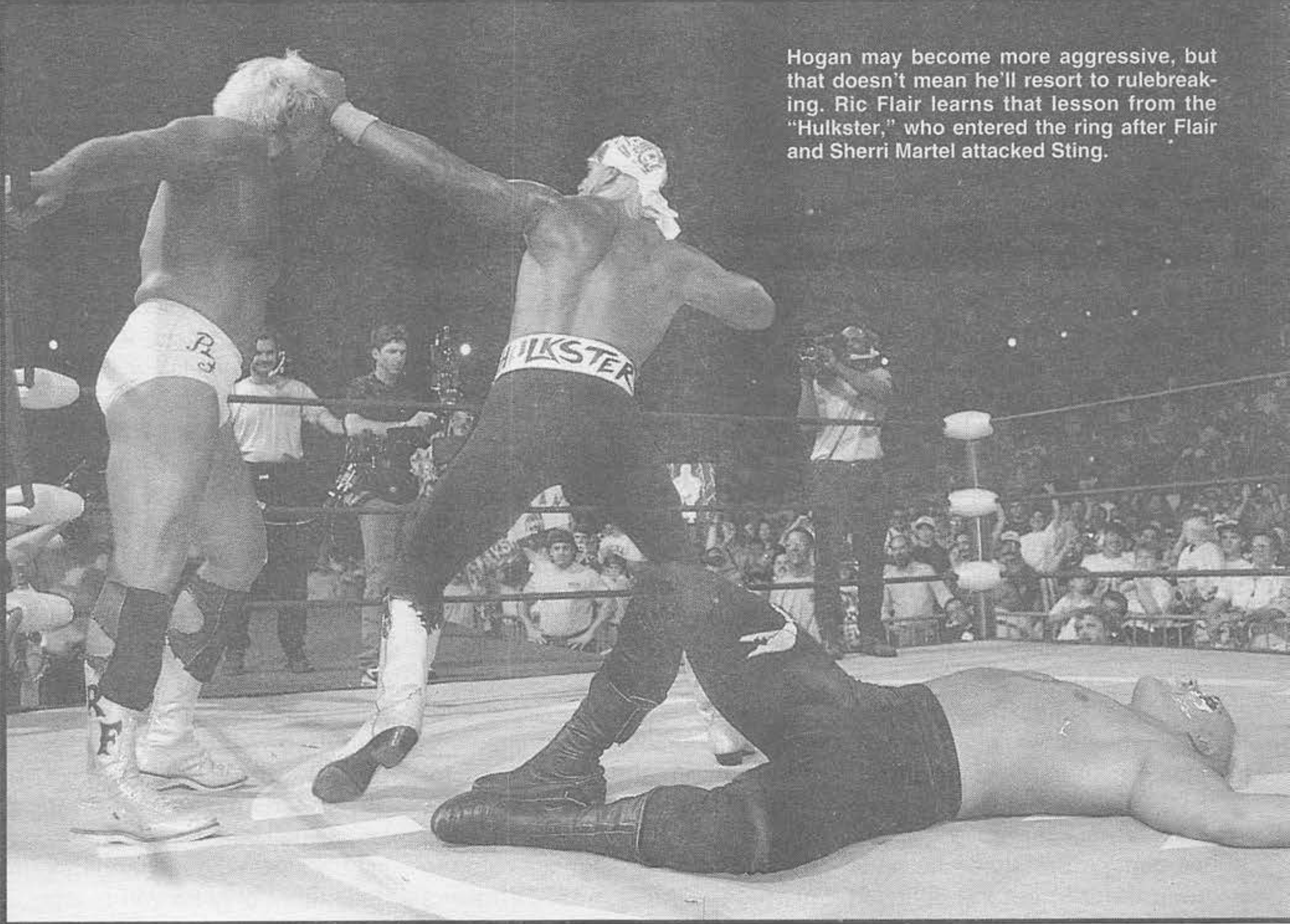
Say Prayers, Take V



For Hulk Hogan to truly rule WCW, he can't use the same tactics he employed so successfully in the WWF. He knows in this federation, he has to take the initiative and use his aggressiveness.

itamins, and Kick Butt

Expecting to see the same Hulk Hogan in WCW you've watched for the last 10 years in the WWF? You're in for a surprise. Hogan still has his principles, but plans to use a new style he believes will bring him another world title

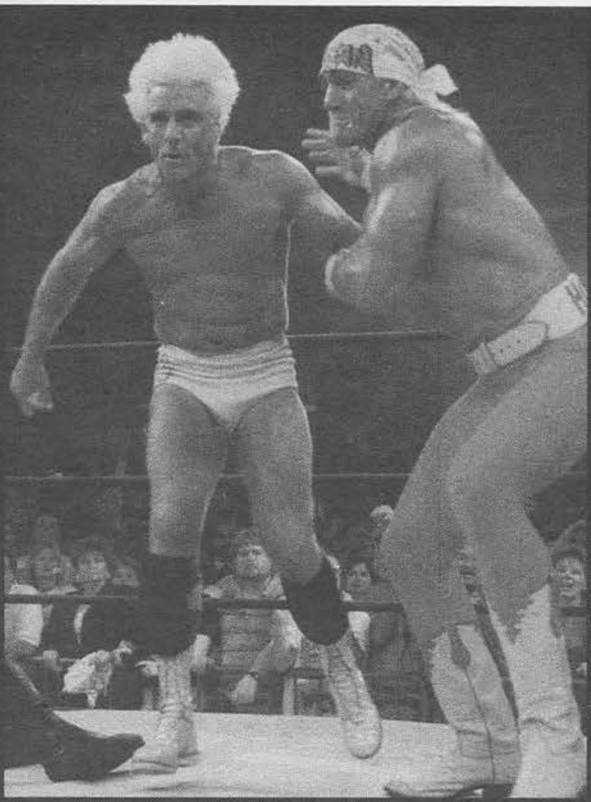


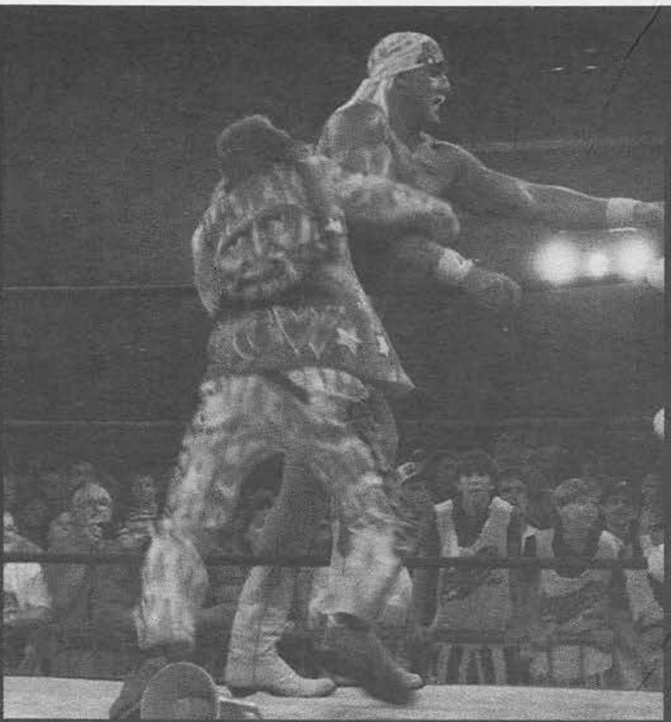
Hogan may become more aggressive, but that doesn't mean he'll resort to rulebreaking. Ric Flair learns that lesson from the "Hulkster," who entered the ring after Flair and Sherri Martel attacked Sting.

By Chris Bernucca

THERE ARE MANY who believe, at least initially, that Hulk Hogan is going to have a tough time in WCW. And one of those people is Hulk Hogan.

The "Hulkster" has no misconceptions about what lies ahead now that he has jumped federations. He knows that there are different wrestlers in WCW, with a distinctly different style than what he encountered in the WWF. He knows that the respect accorded him after years as champion in the WWF will be nowhere to be found





Hogan is aware of the challenges awaiting him in WCW, among them Flair (left), while manager Jimmy Hart may find it difficult to harness his more assertive wrestler (above).

in WCW. And he knows he must make his move toward the title right away, because he isn't getting any younger and can't afford to let any losses bury him in the rankings.

"It's not going to be easy, brother," Hogan said of his quest for a sixth world title and his first in WCW. "There are plenty of great wrestlers in WCW, and all of them want the same thing I want. Some of the things I did to stay on top in the WWF won't help me here."

Hogan has come up with a simple game plan to make his transition into WCW a smooth one. It may sound familiar, but there is a subtle change he figures he must make in order to get the attention of his foes. It goes like this: Say your prayers ... take your vitamins ... and kick butt!

The first two parts of the game plan are unchanged from Hogan's days in the WWF. He has always been a spiritual person whose belief in God has helped him through the tough times in his life. He maintains conversation with God through his prayers and believes God has provided him with guidance and protection throughout his career.

"There's no other explanation," Hogan said. "I've wrestled against the toughest characters in this sport and I'm still here. I've had injuries that could have ended my career, but didn't. God has been very good to me, and I try to be good to Him."

Of course, Hogan takes vitamins as nutritional supplements to a carefully planned diet. But for Hogan, taking vitamins only marks the start of a day involving total dedication and diligence. Hogan professes an almost-religious adherence to his diet and training regimen and he credits his success to that dedication.

"It's real easy to stay in bed the extra hour, or find something else to do," he admits. "But once you've developed your body to the point that I have, there is a lot of hard work in maintaining it. Some of the work is nutritional and some of it is physical. But it has to be done. If you don't, you'll find your shoulders on the mat."

But it is the final part of Hogan's mantra that has changed. The "Hulkster" has always been one of the sport's good guys, making public appearances and promoting the sport on talk shows. He is friendly and trusting to a fault, behavior that has gotten him in trouble in the past. He has also softened a bit since becoming a television and movie star. In recent title losses, he has appeared more resigned to accepting defeat, instead of coming back with the fury and determination that only he can muster up in big matches. He knows he must change if he wants to win the WCW World title.

"I can't be a nice guy anymore," Hogan said. "I can't sit back and wait for the action to come to me. I have to be more aggressive. I have to take the bull by the horns, brother, go for the gusto."

As soon as he finished that sentence, Hogan shifted gears.

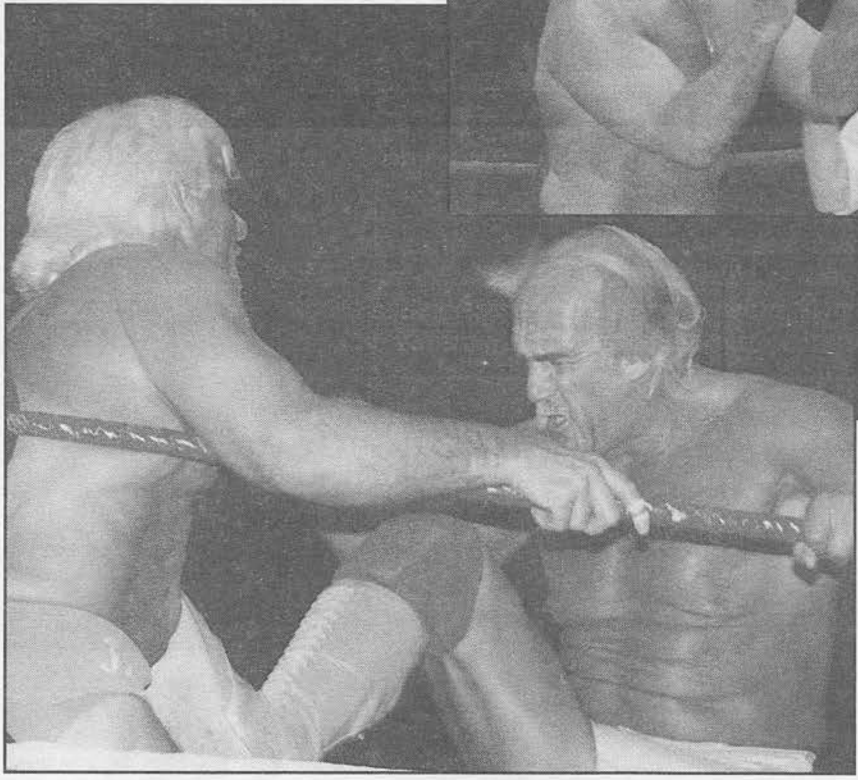
"I don't want to worry the little 'Hulkamaniacs' out there," he added. "Hulk Hogan is not going to be a rulebreaker. That word is not in my vocabulary. 'Hulkamania' will still rule, and before it's all over, 'Hulkamania' will rule WCW as world champion. But changing federations means I have to change my style. You're going to see a leaner, meaner Hulk Hogan in WCW."

Perhaps Hogan has already done some work in scouting his new opponents. One of his first foes figures to be current champion Ric Flair, someone whose style he knows well from their days together in the WWF. But Hogan is already looking ahead. A victory over Flair would set up a long line of contenders against whom he has never wrestled, men like Big Van Vader, Steve Austin, and Sting, for starters.

There is no denying the differences between the two major federations. Despite the successes of Bret Hart and Shawn Michaels, the WWF is a big man's federation, with a heavy emphasis on tall, muscular brawlers with limited ring skills. And despite the recent dominance by Vader, WCW is filled with smaller, more compact competitors whose overall technical acumen may be the best of any group in the world.

While in the WWF, Hogan used his massive size and strength to overpower opponents, then used his clothesline-legdrop combination to finish them off. The idea of facing more acrobatic and durable foes in WCW has forced him to reevaluate that strategy. His weight is down from 302 pounds to 275, and he has been working on expanding his ring repertoire, even at this relatively late stage in his career.

Hogan also cannot rely on his reputation to intimidate opponents as it did in the WWF. In the past, many foes feared Hogan. That is no longer the case. Most of WCW's best are chomping at the bit to get at the legendary "Hulkster." Hogan knows he must be the aggressor and rebuild his reputation as a force in the ring.



The Hogan reputation helped him against Flair during their series of matches in the WWF (above), but the "Hulkster" doesn't have that aura in WCW. He'll need to go a different route to cause the "Nature Boy" pain (left).

Say your prayers, take your vitamins, and kick butt. It sounds like a simple plan. But after 10 years of raging success, it's hard to make such a drastic shift in strategy. Hogan is hoping his newfound aggressiveness will catch his opponents by surprise. After all, most of them have never wrestled him, either. And the "Hulkster" hopes his new commandments will lead him to the promised land called the WCW World title. □

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF ROYALTY: HOW OWEN HART BECAME KING OF THE RING

The King of the Ring tournament remains the Harts' domain. Fan favorite Bret captured the event in 1993, while younger brother and rulebreaker Owen won honors in '94. Here's the route "The Rocket" took to reach King-dom

By Dave Rosenbaum

IN ENGLAND, ROYALTY is passed down from generation to generation, from father to son. In the WWF, royalty has been passed from brother to brother.

The 1994 WWF King of the Ring tournament was held on June 19 at Baltimore Arena. Here's how Owen Hart became the WWF's King of the Ring. His older brother and chief rival Bret was King of the Ring in 1993.

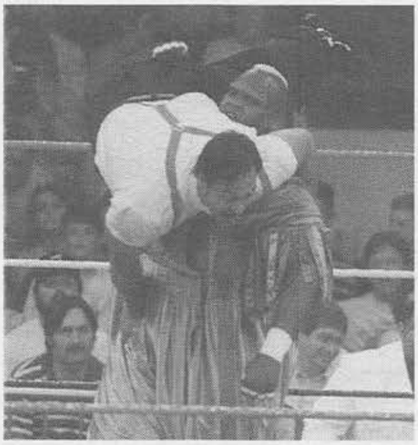
QUARTERFINALS

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Razor Ramon. WWF's premier big man vs. the "Bad Guy." Bigelow was joined at ringside by Luna Vachon, who has since joined him

BAM BAM BIGELOW VS. RAZOR RAMON: Bigelow reached the finals of the '93 tourney, but couldn't repeat his success this time around. He controlled much of the action (above), but Ramon threw him off the top rope to set up the pin (below).

as a member of Ted DiBiase's "Million-Dollar Stable."

This brawl peaked in the eighth minute, when Ramon slammed Bigelow but missed on his "Razor's Edge." Bigelow slammed Ramon and climbed to the top rope for a moonsault, but Ramon threw him off and scored the pin at 8:24.

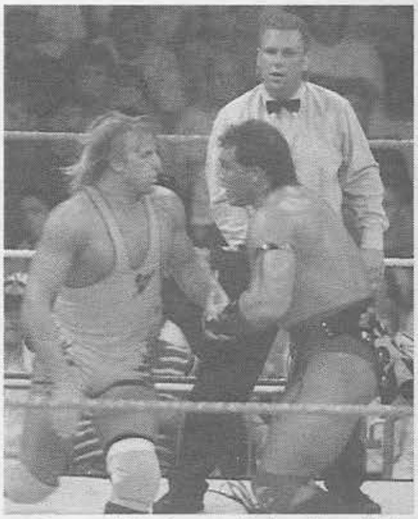


IRWIN R. SCHYSTER VS. MABEL: While Mabel made the most of his weight advantage (above), he tired quickly. Then it was Schyster's turn to take control (below), and he won after capitalizing on Mabel's failed splash

Irwin R. Schyster vs. Mabel. The taxman and the fat man. Schyster entered a heavy favorite because Mabel entered heavily. Mabel maintained the advantage for most of the match, but couldn't put away IRS and was laboring early.

A tired Mabel slammed Schyster, but misfired on a splash from the second rope when IRS shook him down. Mabel came down like a stack of pancakes, and Irwin hooked his leg for the pin at 5:40.

OWEN HART VS. TATANKA: The struggling Native American had Hart in trouble early on (above). However, "The Rocket" held on, took command (below), and eventually posted the pin.



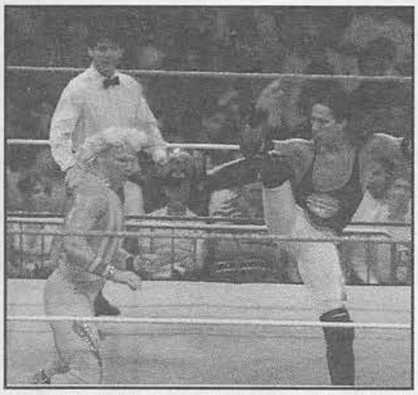
Owen Hart vs. Tatanka. This shaped up as the most intriguing quarterfinal match, and proved to be Owen's toughest test.

The Native American threw a scare into Owen early when he got a two-count at 0:25 and nearly scored another pin less than a minute later. Although Owen was clearly in trouble, Tatanka couldn't get the three-count.

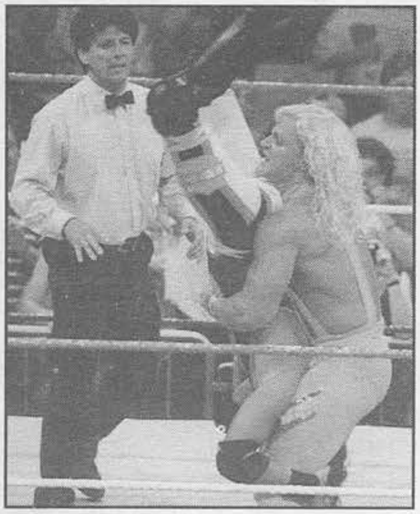
This was a great match for fans who love scientific wrestling. Owen smartly worked his way out of trouble, then reversed a whip

and a sunset flip by holding Tatanka's legs to get the pin at 8:20. The result confirmed Owen's rising stock in recent months, while Tatanka has been struggling.

Jeff Jarrett vs. The Kid. As is his habit, Kid had a few chances early and almost scored a few pins in the opening minutes. The



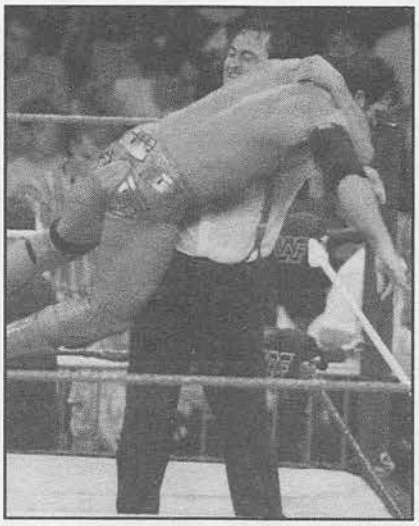
JEFF JARRETT VS. THE KID: The dynamic light heavyweight used his kicking skills to full advantage (above) and eventually pinned "Double-J." The win was costly, as Jarrett severely injured Kid with three piledrivers (below).



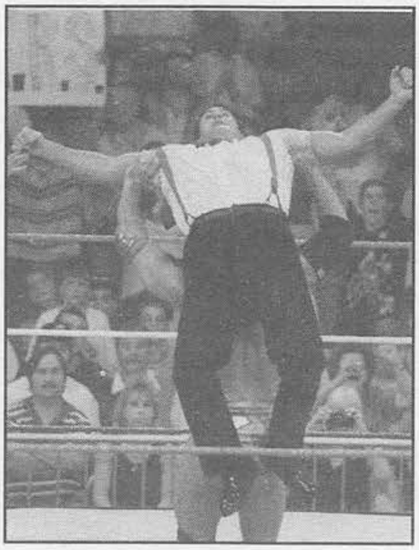
dynamic light heavyweight spent the rest of the match fighting off Jarrett's attacks. "Double-J" went for the figure-four leglock in the fifth minute, but Kid reversed it and executed a small package for the pin at 4:40. Jarrett responded by attacking Kid and injuring him with three piledrivers. Kid was helped back to the dressing room.

SEMIFINALS

Razor Ramon vs. Irwin R. Schyster. This turned into a brawl early. The action started outside

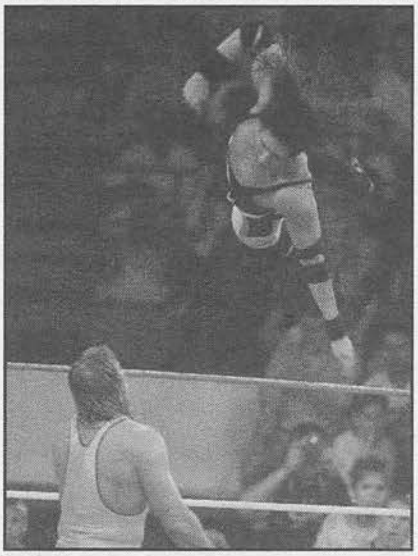


RAZOR RAMON VS. IRWIN R. SCHYSTER: This semifinal match featured plenty of action, and IRS gave Ramon a battle (above). But the "Bad Guy" proved to be too strong for Schyster (below), advancing to the finals.

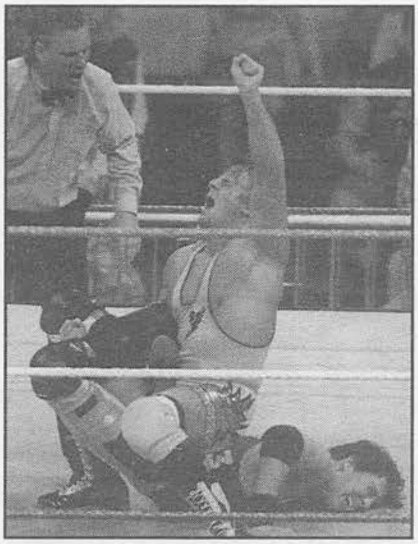


the ring as Ramon whipped Schyster into the turnbuckle and then threw him by his tie. The pace was hectic and it was obvious the match wouldn't last long.

IRS got back into it with a sharp forearm that stunned Ramon. They continued this way, inside the ring, until Ramon used his "Razor's Edge" for the pin at 5:11.



OWEN HART VS. THE KID: Though Kid wasn't at full strength after the Jarrett attack, he still had plenty of aerial skills (above). It wasn't enough to put away Hart, who exults after winning the bout by submission (below).



Owen Hart vs. The Kid. There was some question about whether Kid could wrestle after Jarrett's attack. In fact, he didn't appear when first announced, but finally hobbled down the runway and into the waiting legs of Hart, who leaped through the ropes and knocked down Kid with a flying bodypress.

This match could have been a classic had Kid been at full strength. He quickly recovered with a series of pin attempts—one off a spectacular moonsault—that just missed.

Owen kicked Kid in the head and nearly got the pin. Kid fought back with a belly-to-belly suplex for the three-count. The win was invalidated, however, because Owen's foot was on the ropes.

Owen reversed a sunset flip for a two-count at 3:08. Then he reversed a "Frankensteiner" and caught Kid in his "sharpshooter" for the submission at 3:36.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Razor Ramon vs. Owen Hart. Ramon got an early two-count at 1:37. He later tried to execute his "Razor's Edge", but Owen threw him over the top rope. That's when this match became incredibly intriguing.

Jim Neidhart—who had been in Owen's older brother Bret Hart's corner for his match against Diesel—walked out to ringside, apparently to help Ramon. First he helped revive Ramon. Then he clotheslined the "Bad Guy" and rammed him into the outer post. As he tossed Ramon back into the ring, Owen climbed to the top rope and executed his "Rocket" for the cover, the pin, and the King of the Ring title at 6:34.

"I did it!" Owen screamed. "Everybody, I'm the King of the Ring!"

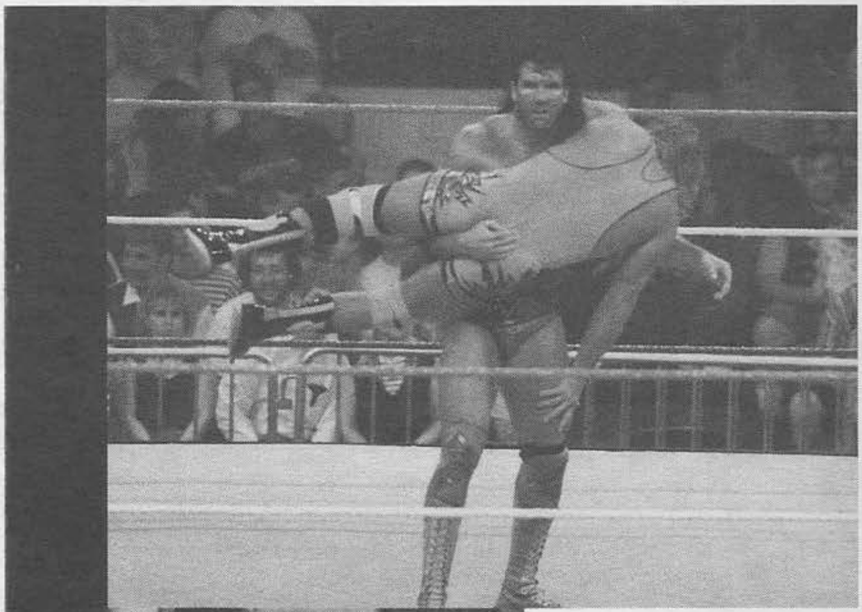
THE CORONATION

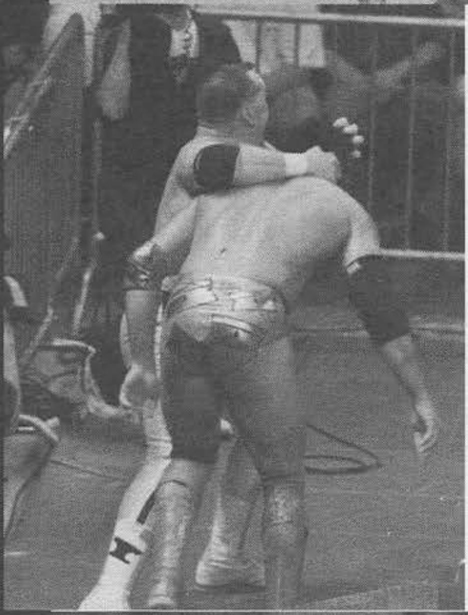
Bret Hart refused comment over his brother's triumph, but Owen had plenty to say.

"I am the 'King of the Raing' and I want everybody to start giving me the respect of a King," Owen spat. "My first proclamation as King is to be known as the 'King of Harts.'"

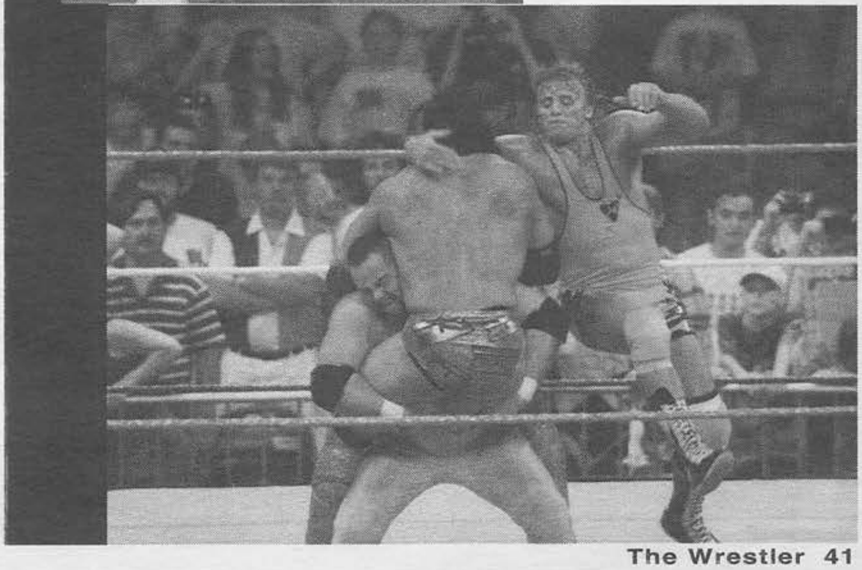
Neidhart fitted him with the crown and scepter. Owen grinned from ear-to-ear.

The crown had been passed, from brother to brother. □

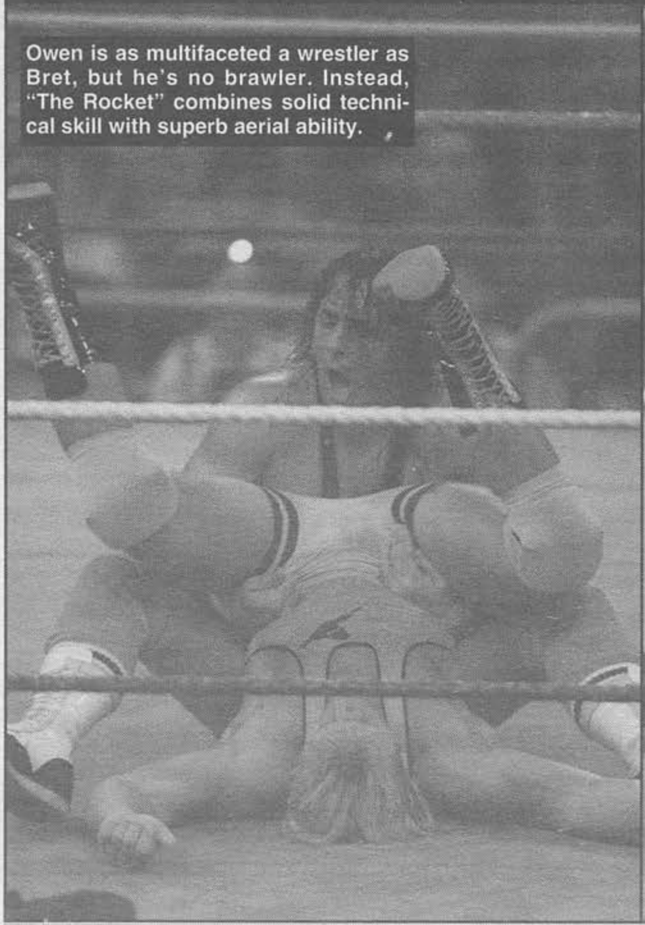




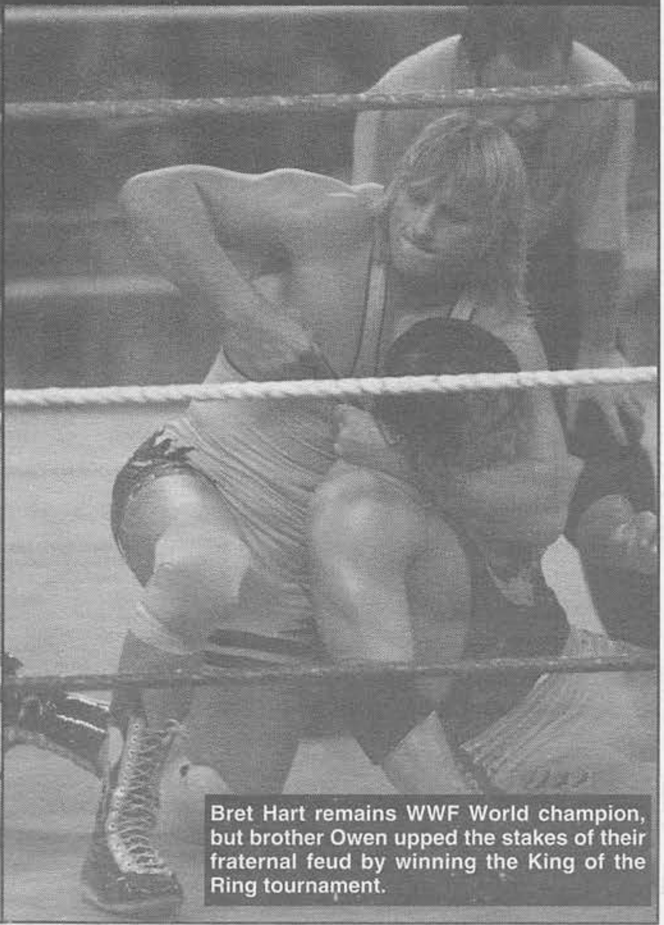
RAZOR RAMON VS. OWEN HART: Ramon dominated the first few minutes (above), before Jim Neidhart came on the scene. It appeared "The Anvil" was on Ramon's side, but he instead sent the "Bad Guy" into the outer post (left). Owen pounced on Ramon after Neidhart helped him win the tournament (below).



WWF KING OR WWF CHAMP: WHICH HART BEATS STRONGER?



Owen is as multifaceted a wrestler as Bret, but he's no brawler. Instead, "The Rocket" combines solid technical skill with superb aerial ability.



Bret Hart remains WWF World champion, but brother Owen upped the stakes of their fraternal feud by winning the King of the Ring tournament.

Forget everything that happened before June 19, 1994. The King of the Ring tournament added a few new factors to the War Between The Harts. Now Bret and Owen are fighting on level ground

King of the Ring: *Exclusive Coverage*

By Dave Rosenbaum

ONE BROTHER CALLS himself the WWF's King of the Ring.

The other brother calls himself the WWF World champion.

Both have every right to their respective titles. They were earned and awarded. But neither man disputes what the other calls himself. Their war is about family and pride.

It is a war Bret Hart never wanted any part of, but now the WWF World champion is caught in a battle he must win.

It is a war Owen Hart always wanted, and now he is gaining momentum in a battle he now knows he can win.

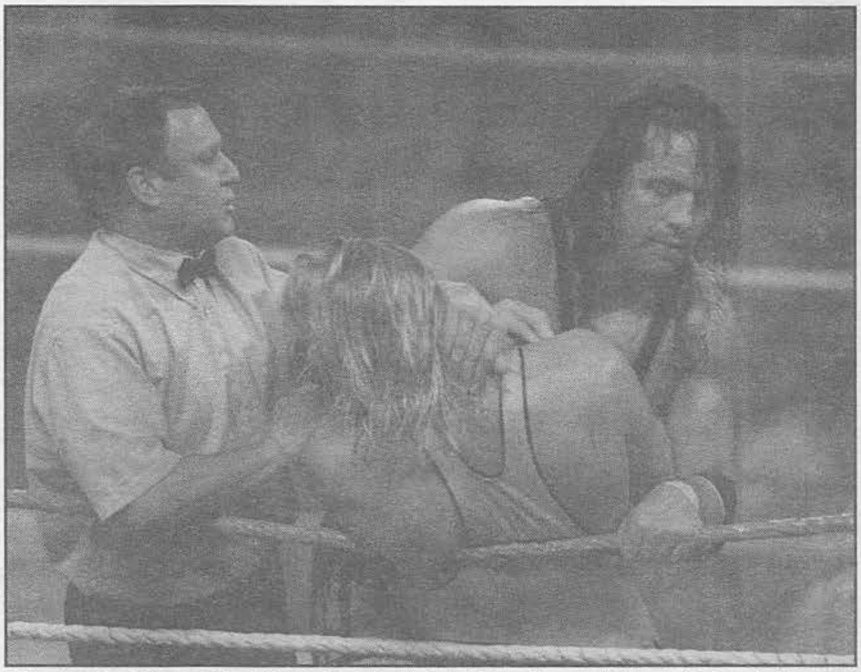
Bret vs. Owen, Owen vs. Bret. It had a life of its own since the Royal Rumble and took on new life on June 19 in Baltimore, when several new ingredients were added to the mix.

A few new explosives were added to the fireworks.

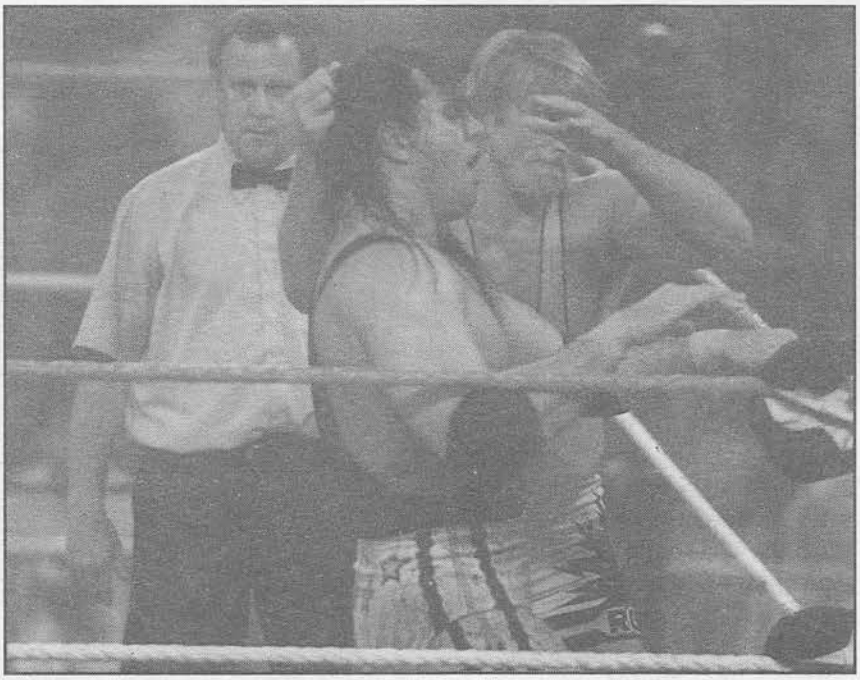
Owen Hart won the King of the Ring tournament, captured by Bret in 1993.

And Jim Neidhart, Bret's former tag team partner in The Hart Foundation, aided Owen in his victory.

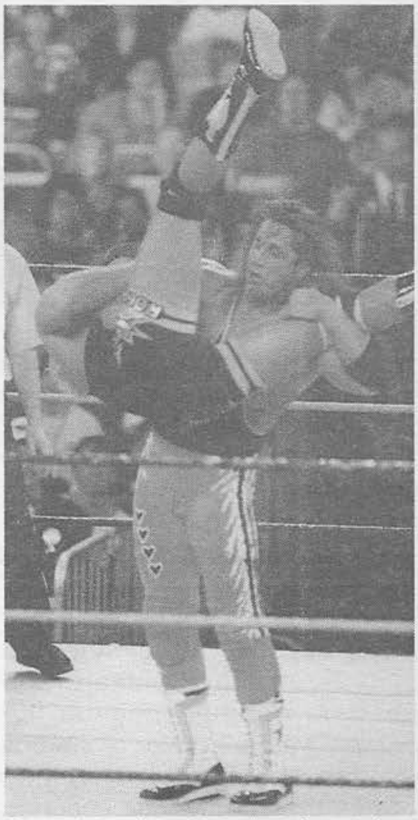
The night before King of the Ring, Bret pinned Owen in Philadelphia and the victory was



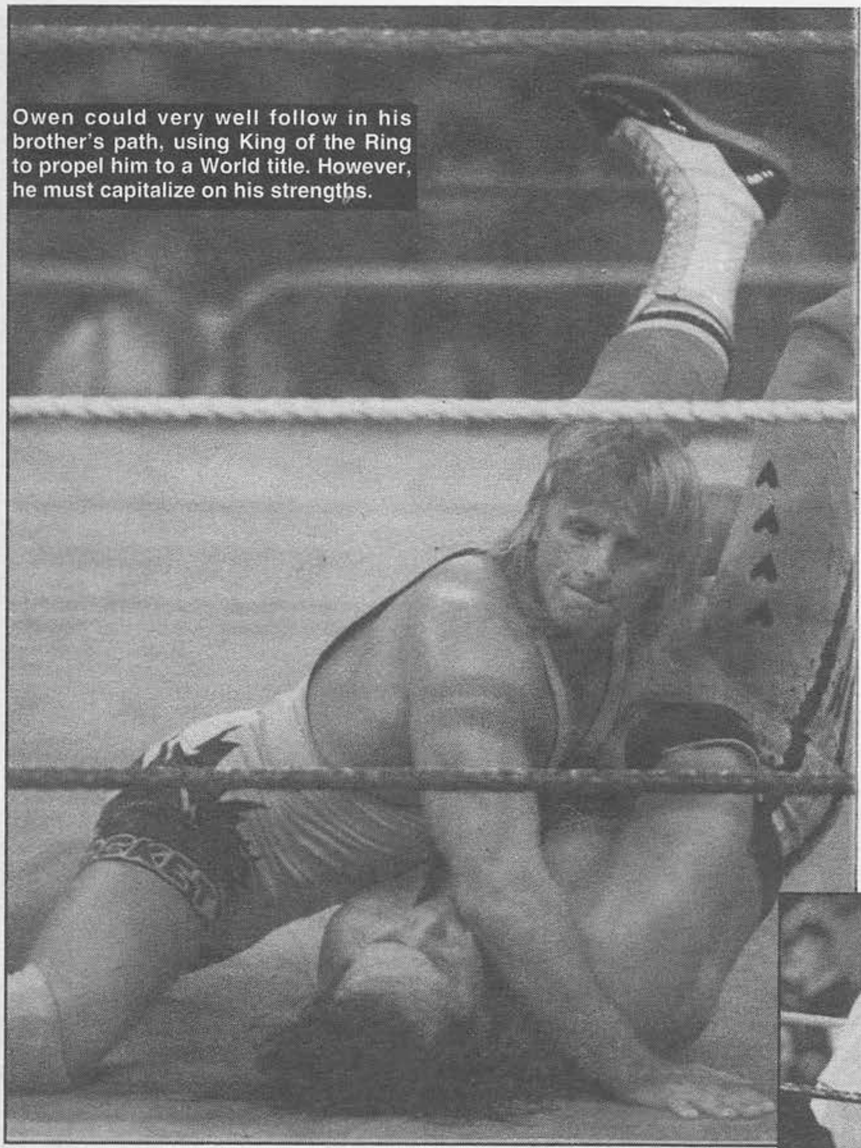
Winning the King of the Ring will only bolster Owen's confidence. It also helps that he now has brother-in-law Jim Neidhart on his side.



Owen's stock has soared of late, but some still consider his WrestleMania win over Bret a fluke. He needs to beat Bret again, without Neidhart's aid.



Owen has given Bret tough matches since WrestleMania, but so far the "Hitman" has prevailed every time.



Owen could very well follow in his brother's path, using King of the Ring to propel him to a World title. However, he must capitalize on his strengths.

reason that Bret and Owen are different, I guess we're all different. Mom and Dad gave us each different gifts."

Bret and Owen are similar in many ways. Both prefer a scientific style, although Bret is more comfortable than Owen when a match disintegrates into an all-out brawl. Perhaps that comes from his years with Neidhart in The Hart Foundation.

The Hart Foundation was a perfect mix of brawler and wrestler. But there were times Bret tagged into a match and realized the trend was irreversible: He was involved in a brawl. At those times, Bret put away his silence and fought.

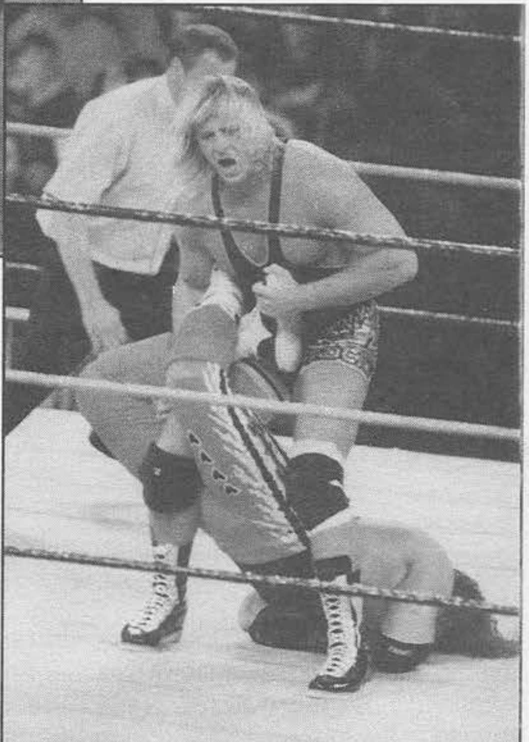
"He always fought like a man," Neidhart once said.

That's why Bret quickly adjusted in his match against Diesel, when Shawn Michaels exposed a turnbuckle. Bret was ready and decisive. There was no doubt going into King of the Ring that Bret was dominating and Owen was scrapping. Owen needed something big to happen and it did. King of the Ring changed everything. It gave Owen confidence at a time when he had none.

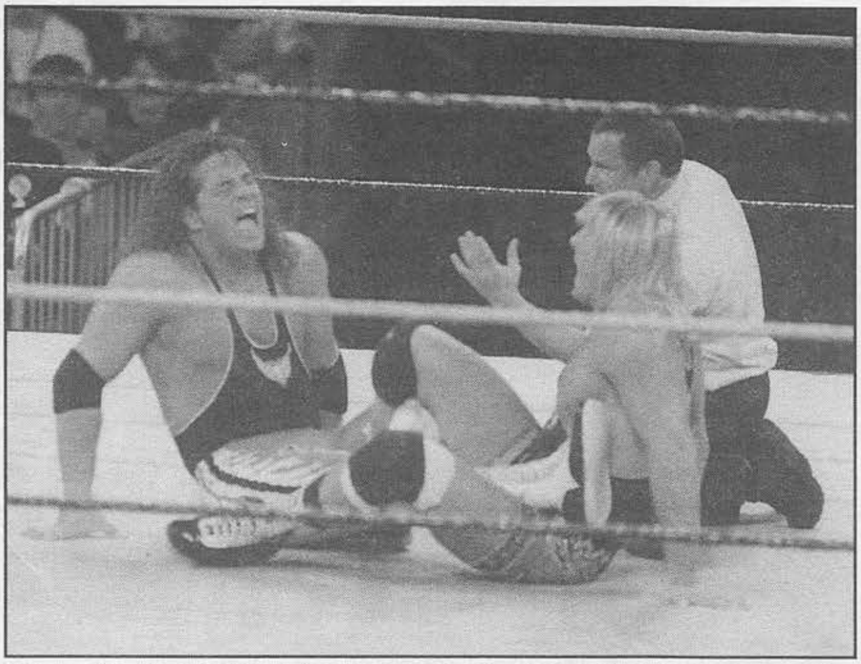
Detractors argue that Owen won because of considerable interference by Neidhart. Supporters rightfully counter that Owen was in control of his final match against Razor Ramon when the interference occurred. That's not the point here. The means became irrelevant when Owen tried on his new crown, justifying the end.

For years, many have argued that Owen is the strongest wrestler in the Hart family. Although Bret is seven pounds heavier and an inch shorter, Owen is extremely talented and turns that seeming weight disadvantage into his best advantage.

"Owen soars," said Keith Hart, one of the Hart siblings. "Sometimes I've said to myself, 'I'm his brother. Why can't I do that?' But for the same



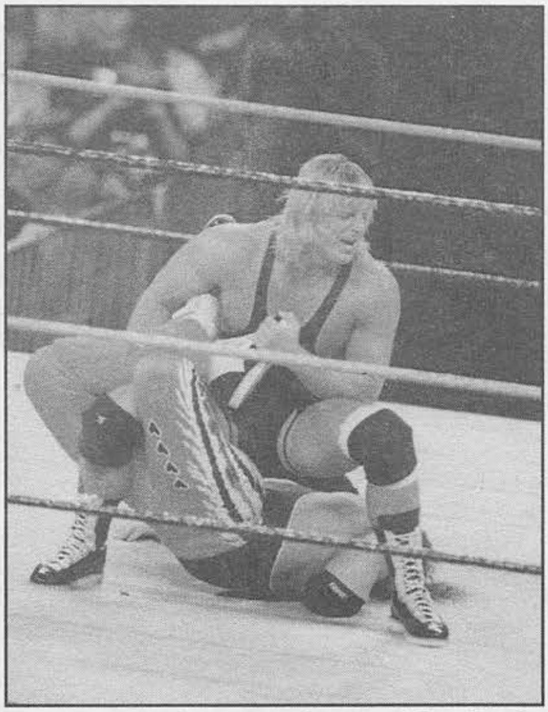
The "sharpshooter" leglock is now a favorite hold of both Hart brothers, but Owen might be better off relying on his superior aerial skills.



For months, the Bret-Owen feud has been one of wrestling's hottest. Owen has even tried on occasion to put his brother away with a figure-four leglock, but Bret has refused to give him the satisfaction of a victory by submission.

rammed Diesel's head into the trap meant for himself. Minutes later, he floored Diesel with a series of clotheslines and a neck-breaker. Where was the science?

He put it away. There has never been a World champion who wasn't multifaceted. Sure, Hulk Hogan was a brawler, but there was some science in his blood. Anyone who has seen him wrestle in Japan wouldn't dispute that. Even Yokozuna, the sumo champion-turned-brawler, had a few moves up his sleeve. And never say Bob Backlund couldn't brawl. He loved science, but he could blind you with violence.



No matter what Owen says, he must defeat Bret for the World title—not merely hurt him—if he is to be considered the family's best wrestler.

Bret is an outstanding champion because he combines science and violence, switching continuously between the two.

Owen can't do that. Few wrestlers would say that Owen's "sharpshooter" is more lethal than Bret's. It isn't. But Owen does something else: He combines science with a spectacular aerial attack.

Nobody, even his family, is sure exactly when Owen became the "The Rocket." Even Stu Hart, Owen's father, recalled: "The kids always liked acrobatics and playing in the gym. I never realized until later that Owen liked it more than the others. He sure has a way."

Bret prefers keeping the action close to the mat. As for Owen, if there's wrestling on the moon, he'll be the first one there. He'll rise, he'll soar.

The Kid experienced Owen's aerial skills firsthand at King of the Ring. As he hobbled to the ring, Kid was struck by a flying bodypress that Owen executed between the second and third ropes. Such dexterity is uncommon in wrestling.

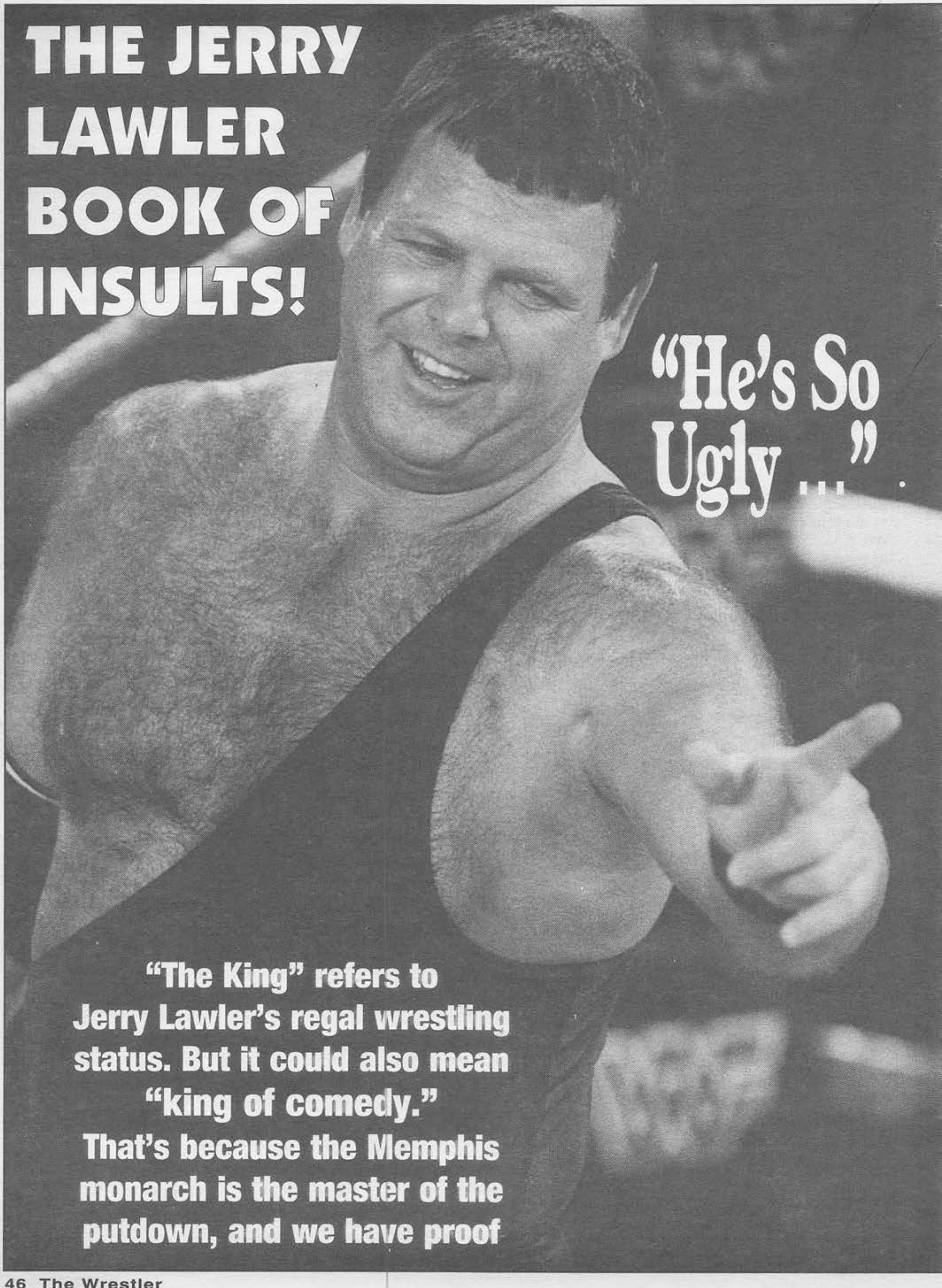
Owen's advantage over Bret is that he can do what few other wrestlers can. The problem in the earlier matches is that Owen didn't have enough confidence to do what he does best. Now he has that confidence. He's the king and we're seeing a different Owen.

He also has Neidhart, who obviously has a few bones to pick with Bret. The Hart Foundation broke up unexpectedly and there are still hard feelings. Owen vs. Bret could turned into Neidhart vs. Bret. It's already Owen and Neidhart vs. Bret.

Ultimately, Owen must settle this score on his own. He wants respect and he can't get it if Neidhart keeps interfering. Owen needs to prove his personal worth. He wants to show the world he's better than his brother.

Owen is fortunate that he has a lot to work with. Is he stronger than Bret? Probably not. But if Owen capitalizes on his specific strengths, the WWF World title could be his. □

THE JERRY LAWLER BOOK OF INSULTS!



"He's So Ugly ..."

"The King" refers to Jerry Lawler's regal wrestling status. But it could also mean "king of comedy." That's because the Memphis monarch is the master of the putdown, and we have proof

*JERRY LAWLER WILL always be remembered for his contentious appearance with Andy Kaufman on **Late Night With David Letterman** in 1982. But it's entirely possible that if Lawler had never pursued wrestling, he might still have been a Letterman guest—as a comic.*

Lawler has one of wrestling's quickest wits, as viewers of "King's Court" will no doubt agree. He fires some of the most barbed one-liners this side of Don Rickles, and has assembled some of his best into "Jerry Lawler's Book Of Insults."

Here's a sample of "The King's" royal wit, both from the book and some of his recent TV appearances. Sit back and enjoy ... unless you're one of his targets!

There is no family Jerry Lawler enjoys insulting more than the Harts. Parents Helen and Stu have frequently been the targets of "The King's" scorn, as has son Bret.

On Stu Hart: The other day I asked him to act his age, and he died.

Is that your suit or are you paying off a bet you lost?

Is your family happy? Or do you go home at night?

To Helen Hart: What time are you due back in Woolworth's window?

She almost called it quits after her fourth child was born because she had read that every fifth child born in the world is Chinese.

Every once in a while she gets a mud pack. It improves her looks for a few days—then the mud falls off.

She was born old. When she was a teenager, her acne had liver spots.

To "Dream Machine" Troy Graham: I don't recall your face, but your breath is familiar.

He's a perfect candidate for a mercy killing.

He's got a new type of insurance ... Black and Blue Cross.

To Bret Hart: Do you remember what happened last year at King of the Ring or do you have so much oil on your head it slipped your mind?

I couldn't warm up to you if we were cremated together.

The man with Jurassic Park parents.

On Eddie Gilbert: He paid $500 to have his family tree searched and found out he was the sap.

If they can make penicillin out of moldy bread, surely they can make something out of you.

That guy is so ugly even his razor backs away from his face.

He's the type of guy you like to run into—when you're driving and he's walking.

On Doug Gilbert: No one really knows what makes him so obnoxious, but whatever it is really works.

When I first saw your suit, I thought my eyes were bad—now I wish they were.

If I had your face, I'd pay a pickpocket to lift it.

To Maryland Gov. William Donald Schaefer, after he admitted on the King of the Ring pay-per-view, "I'm an old Hulk Hogan fan myself": I want to say hello to Gov. Budweiser tonight. I understand you're still living in the past.

He should shut his mouth before someone sticks an apple in it.

To Duke "The Dumpster" Droese: You stink when you're spoken to.

A crumb like you should have stayed in bread.

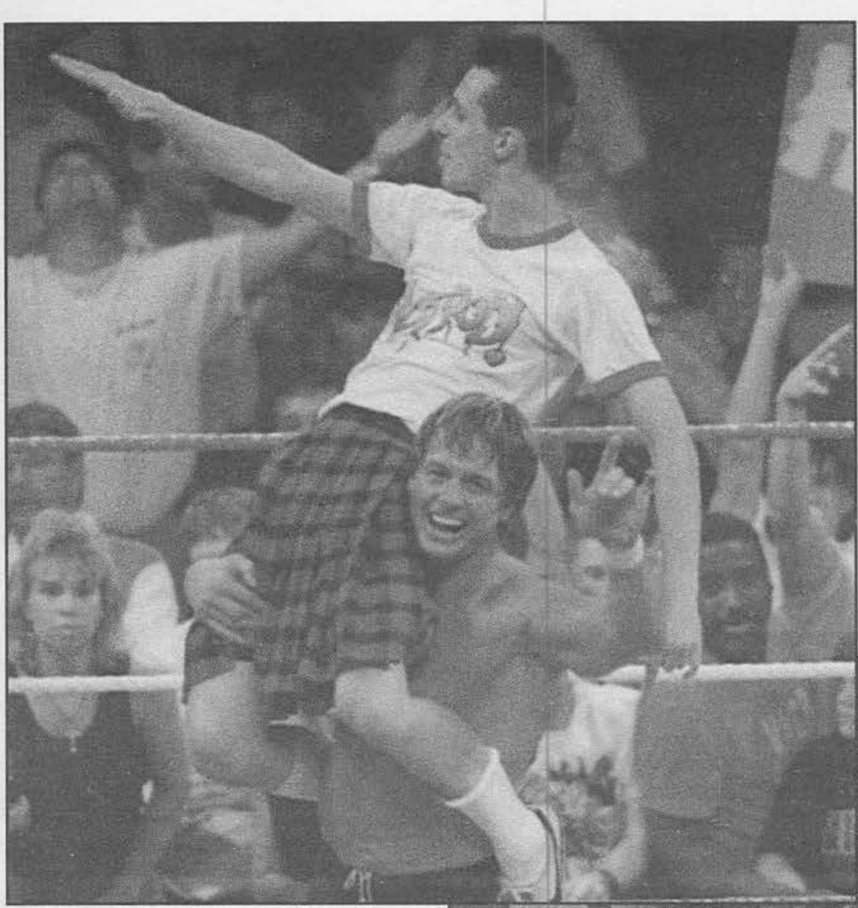
I know you're proud you came up from the gutter, but I think you're getting homesick.

On Roddy Piper: His death notice won't appear in the obituary column. It will be under "public improvements."

He's the kind of guy who can really creep into your heart and really creep into your mind ... in fact, you'll never find a bigger creep.

I need a bookmark more than I need you. So step in front of a steamroller on your way out.

To the Roddy Piper imitator:



Lawler used a scrawny Roddy Piper imitator to poke fun at the "Rowdy Scot" on his "King's Court" segment. Little did he realize that both the real and the wannabe Piper would end up having the last laugh at King of the Ring!

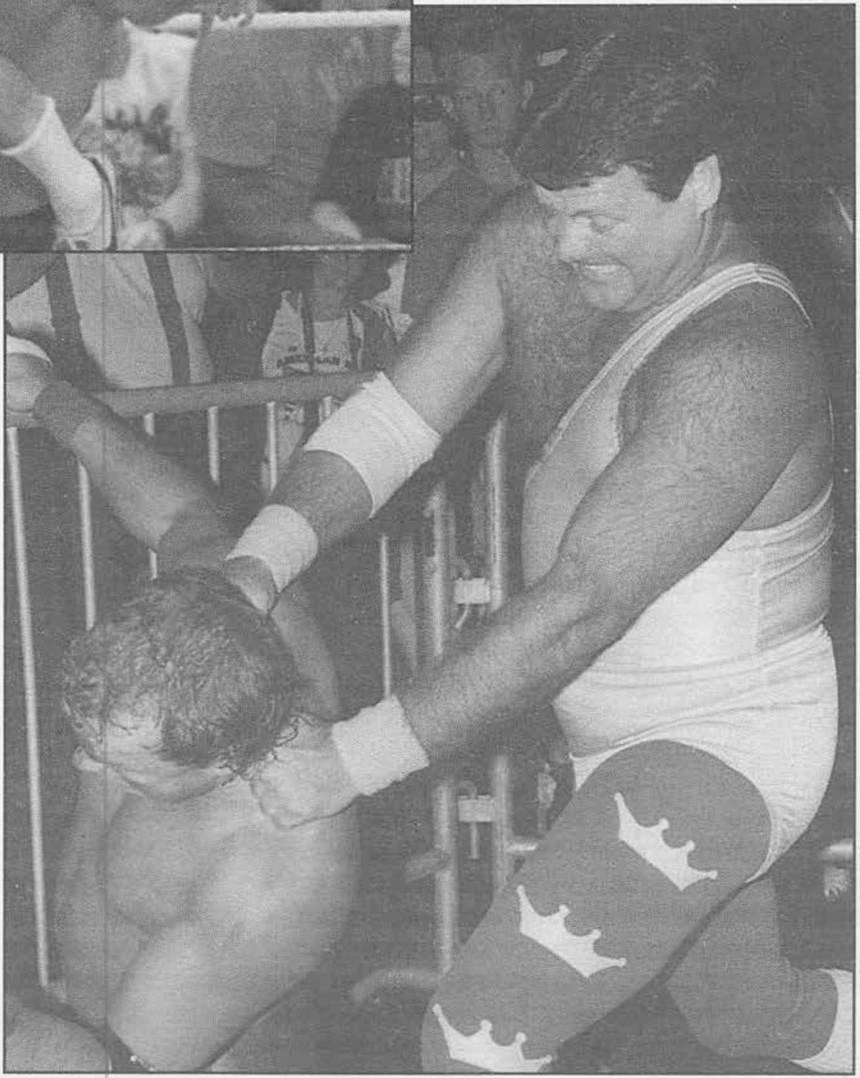
On Luna Vachon: When she goes into a cornfield, she scares all the crows there so badly that they bring back the corn they took last year.

When she goes to the zoo, she has to buy two tickets—one to get in with, and one to get out with.

On Alundra Blayze: She says that whenever she's down in the dumps she gets a new dress. Obviously, that's where she gets them.

Her folks took one look at her when she was born and immediately hired a lawyer to find a loophole in the birth certificate.

Look, I'm not going to engage in a battle of wits with you—I



Lawler always gets plenty of satisfaction from torturing Eddie Gilbert in the ring. But the Memphis monarch also fires plenty of verbal volleys at his longtime foe.

Your muscles look like mosquito bites.

I understand when you were a kid, your mother sent your picture to Ripley, and it was returned marked, "I don't believe it!"

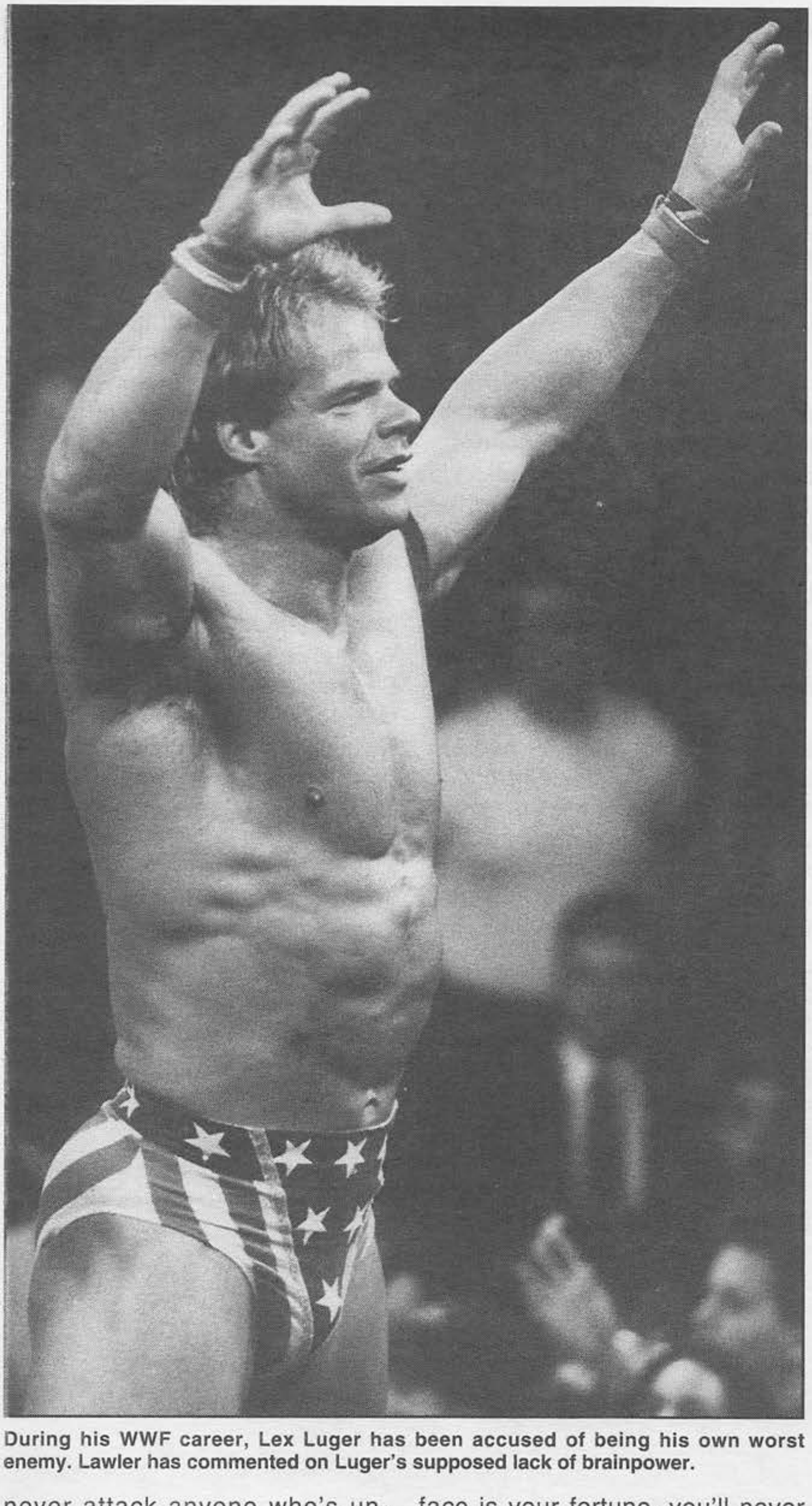
To Nikolai Volkoff: You dress pretty good for a guy who's colorblind.

If he quit work today, he'd have money to live on for the rest of his life ... if he died tomorrow.

The only way he would ever be worth anything is if they ever start selling him off by the pound.

On Mr. Fuji: Doesn't have an enemy in the world ... he outlived all of them.

The stork that brought him should have been arrested for carrying dope.



During his WWF career, Lex Luger has been accused of being his own worst enemy. Lawler has commented on Luger's supposed lack of brainpower.

Lawler says Luna Vachon's appearance could do wonders for the nation's corn crop. Even without her face paint, he may have a valid argument.

never attack anyone who's unarmed.

Her slacks are so tight that if she had a coin in her pocket, you could tell if it was heads or tails.

To Bam Bam Bigelow: If your face is your fortune, you'll never have to pay income tax.

He's not exactly dumb, but he was 14 years old before he could wave goodbye.

He's so tough, he went to reform school on a scholarship.

On Tommy Rich: The last time he was in the hospital, he got get-well cards from all the nurses.

If your doctor suggests you exercise with dumbbells, ask him to join you for a walk.

Does your parole board know that you're up this late?

To Curt Hennig: You're one person who'd make a perfect stranger.

If they ever put a price on your head, take it.

On The Kid: Is that your face, or did you block a kick?

He has a baby face and a brain to match.

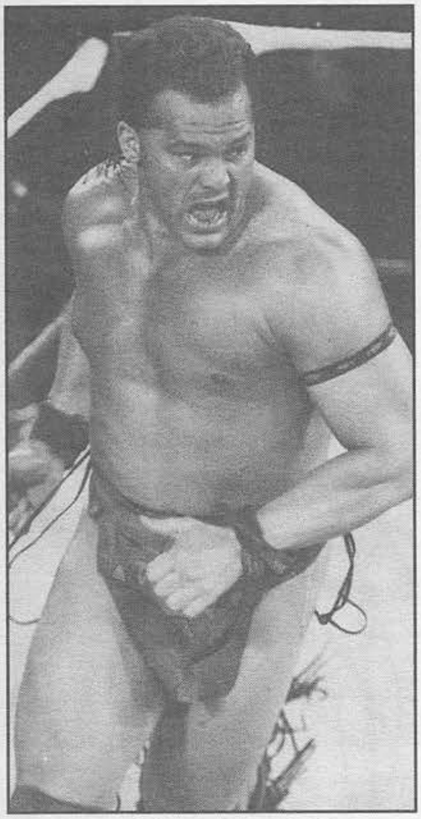
He must have gone to the blood bank and forgotten to say "when."

When he wears a black suit, he resembles a closed umbrella.

To Lex Luger: You should be careful not to let your mind wander ... it's too weak to be out alone. □

CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)



Tatanka has hit a cold spell of late, and the frustration is beginning to show. His anger overflowed in a match against tax specialist Irwin R. Schyster, and he was disqualified for slugging the referee.

thrown Sting outside the ring when the overhead lights went out for a few seconds. After that, Sting trapped Austin in a corner, only to have "Stunning" Steve retaliate and escape with a mulekick. Austin followed it up by throwing Sting to the outside, where Parker unsuccessfully tried to choke him. Sting attempted a sunset flip and gained several near falls.

Things looked bleak for Austin when Sting had him in a Scorpion deathlock, but Parker came to the rescue. He entered the ring to interfere, and Sting had to settle for a win by disqualification.

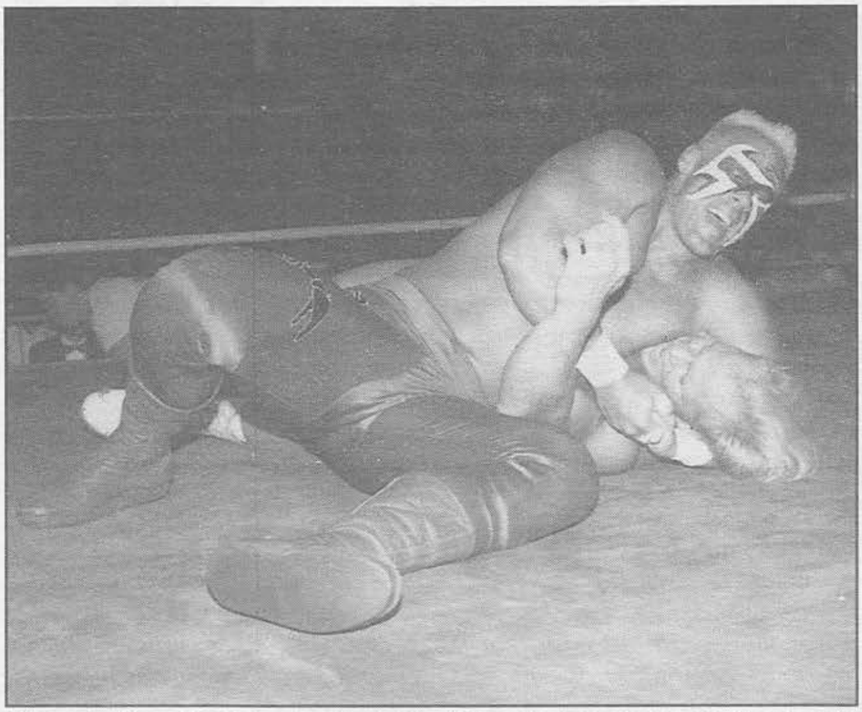
In other bouts: Dustin Rhodes pinned Bunkhouse Buck (managed by Parker) in a bullrope match ... Arn Anderson pinned Brian Pillman ... The Nasty Boys defeated Stars 'n' Stripes when Brian Knobs pinned Marcus Alexander Bagwell ... Erik Watts pinned Bobby Eaton ... WCW World champion Ric Flair (managed by Sherri Martel) pinned Rick Steamboat, as Martel gave Flair a foreign object and he hit Steamboat with it.

Pittsburgh, PA *(Correspondent—Albert Cook):* It wasn't that long ago when WWF announcers always made it a point to mention Tatanka's unbeaten record in the federation. While that fell by the wayside last summer thanks to Ludvig Borga, Tatanka remained one of the WWF's rising stars and seemed to be on the verge of serious title contention.

Suddenly, Tatanka isn't quite the intimidating force he used to be. Perhaps the strain is getting to him. The Native American always used to wrestle under control, but here at the Civic Arena, a crowd of about 6,500 watched him and Irwin R. Schyster brawl outside the ring at the start of their match.

Schyster wrestled conservatively, using several holds to keep Tatanka on the mat for several minutes. Tatanka finally escaped and went on the offensive, but the tax attorney countered by fleeing the ring. The infuriated Native American finally caught up with IRS and brought him back inside. When the referee attempted to intervene, an angry Tatanka refused and shoved him away. Consequently, Schyster was awarded a victory by disqualification.

In other bouts: Doink the Clown pinned Jeff Jarrett ... WWF World Women's champion Alundra Blayze pinned Luna Vachon with a belly-to-back suplex ... Kwang the Ninja pinned The Kid ... Yokozuna (managed by Mr. Fuji) pinned Typhoon with a belly-to-belly suplex ... Lex Luger pinned Crush after a forearm blow ... WWF World champion Bret Hart pinned Owen Hart. □



Sting puts Steve Austin in a headlock. The "Stinger" came close to pinning the U.S. champ, only to have Austin's manager, Col. Robert Parker, interfere. Sting thus won by disqualification.

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YOUR LETTERS

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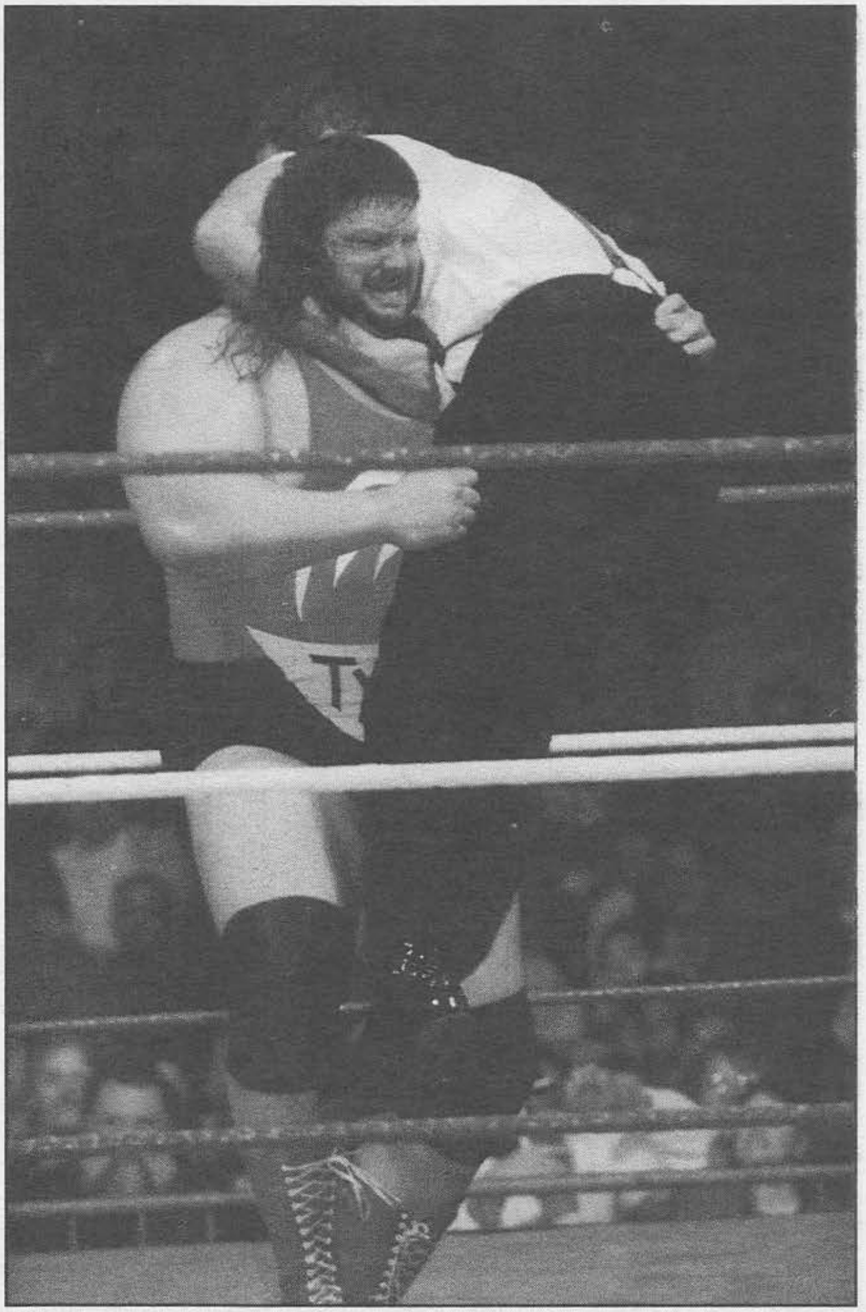


While Typhoon's return to the WWF pleases reader Judd Terson, he says it's wrong for him to feud with Yokozuna.

dating as he once was, so he has to change their minds.

Look at what he did in his very brief feud with Earthquake. The mighty 'Quake beat him in a sumo match on *WWF Monday Night Raw*, but got destroyed and badly hurt later on the "WrestleMania Revenge Tour." Now he's back wrestling on the independent circuit in Canada. It's nice to see Typhoon trying to get revenge for his former tag team partner, but my fear is he will also be defeated—and possibly injured—by Yokozuna.

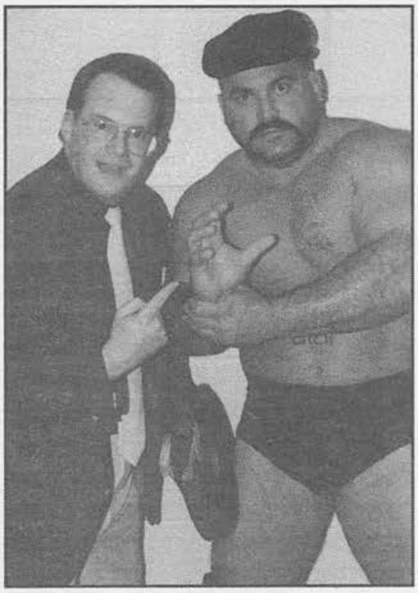
JUDD TERSON
Sacramento, CA

CORNETTE IS THROUGH

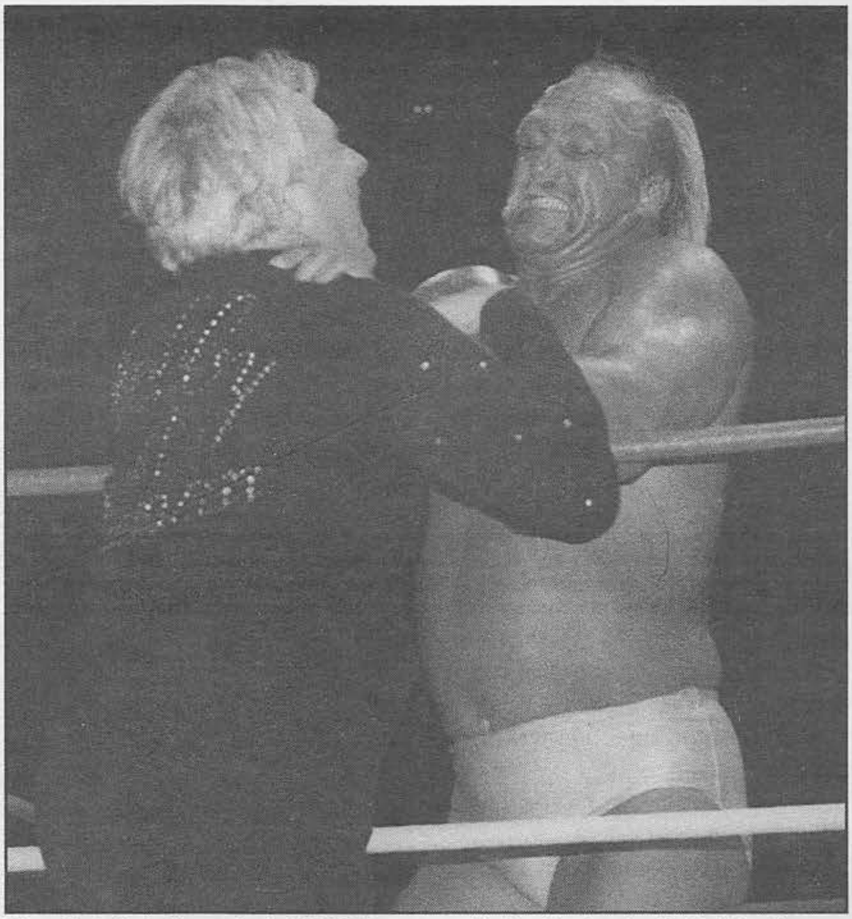
When Jim Cornette looks back on 1994, I bet he won't remember it too fondly. His Heavenly Bodies were forced out of Smoky Mountain when they lost to The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Now they're struggling in Japan and in the WWF. Then Yokozuna lost the WWF World title to Bret Hart at WrestleMania X. So who does he get as his main stablemate in SMW? Bruiser Bedlam?

I can't believe that's the best man he could find. Cornette's problem is he's obsessed with Smoky Mountain's own commissioner, Bob Armstrong. That's the reason he signed Bedlam in the first place—to help him crush Armstrong. Cornette's got to stop worrying about Armstrong and go out and find some great new talent to add to his stable. He was voted Manager of the Year for 1993 by *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* readers. The way 1994 is going, he has no chance to repeat.

DAVE WORLIE
Owensboro, KY



Jim Cornette's alliance with Bruiser Bedlam doesn't excite reader Dave Worlie. He believes Cornette is too obsessed with Smoky Mountain Commissioner Bob Armstrong to find new talent for his weakened stable.



Now that Hulk Hogan's in WCW, he can rekindle his feud with Bobby Heenan. That's good news for reader Gil Lewis, who likes "The Brain" as an announcer but prefers him as a manager.

HEENAN'S CALLING

With Hulk Hogan making headlines in WCW, I'm shocked that Bobby "The Brain" Heenan isn't getting back into managing. Heenan uses most of his air time on *WCW Saturday Night* telecasts ripping the "Hulkster" and telling everyone how bad it is that Hogan is in WCW. "The Brain" is supporting Ric Flair 100 percent in that feud.

Frankly, with Hogan around, I don't know how long Heenan will be able to remain at the broadcast table. He practically made a living trying to eliminate Hogan when they were both in the WWF. He brought in wrestler after wrestler, hoping one of them would finally drive Hogan out of the sport. It wouldn't surprise me if somewhere down the line, he tried the same thing in WCW. Heenan's a great announcer, but he's an even better manager.

GIL LEWIS
Savannah, GA □

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NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

Lakes are ponds. The Rocky Mountains are flat.

My wife and I are newcomers to South Florida and if we knew there were beaches in Orlando, we would've moved there. It's much cheaper than Broward County.

You know, late last year I drove to Orlando for a hockey game and wondered why anyone would want to live there, unless they worked for Disney. Now I know.

It's the beaches.

People laughed when Walt Disney said he wanted to build a theme park in Orlando, previously known as the middle of nowhere. Now we know why he picked Orlando.

Disney loved beaches. (There's one in Anaheim, right?)

The Orlando Magic should've been the Orlando Wave.

Orlando Arena should be the Beachfront Center.

I hope Sensational Sherri brought her bathing suit. You know Hogan brought his. He wrestles in it.

Of course, this is all a big joke. But the joke's on WCW.

You see, WCW has an image problem. People perceive it as not being up to the WWF's level. WCW has another problem—its long history of marketing mistakes. If Hulk Hogan came to WCW in 1984, he'd be Lex Luger right now. The Road Warriors worked in WCW because they had their image before they arrived.

WCW was way behind the WWF in pay-per-view events and lagged badly in TV production values. Now, finally, WCW has caught up in both areas and one more important—quality of wrestlers. WCW has the big stars. The WWF is gasping for air with Jim Neidhart.

This is WCW's chance to do everything right. It doesn't need people laughing because of a misnamed pay-per-view event.

Why Bash at the Beach? I don't know. Why not just The Great American Bash? There's history associated with that name. Bash at the Beach means nothing, especially when it's held in Orlando.

Next thing you know, WCW will rename Starrcade, call it Summercade in December.

Or how about Halloween Havoc at Thanksgiving?

When people heard "Bash at the Beach in Orlando," they laughed. They were concentrating on the name instead of the event. Good marketing people know never to distract the buyer from the product. The buyers were distracted. They were busy laughing. I just can't get over this.

Now please excuse me while I go skiing in that mountain range near Fort Lauderdale.

***

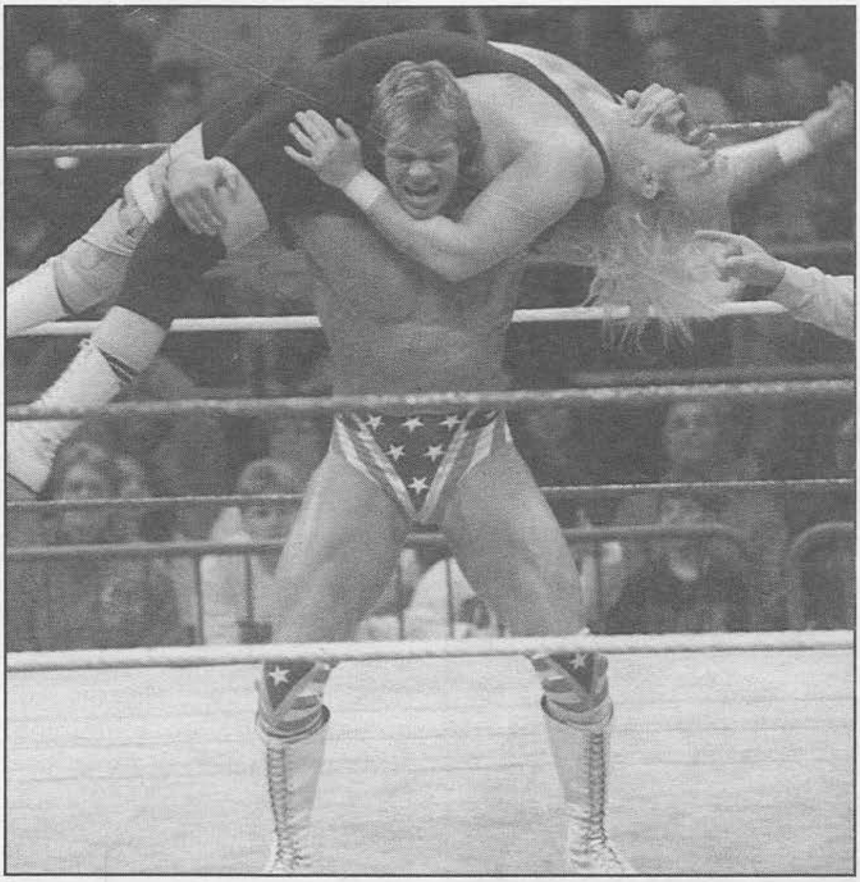
The WWF is spiralling downhill fast and I don't see anyone who can reverse the trend. Bret Hart's a great wrestler, but he's only Bret Hart. The WWF needs a superstar. It needs Lex Luger to step forward.

The best thing that could happen to the WWF would be for Luger to become World champion. Luger has been destined for superstardom for so long that it's no longer his destiny.

The time is now, Lex.

Of course, Luger will pass up this opportunity, too. We all overrated Luger nine years ago and we're still overrating him. Not me.

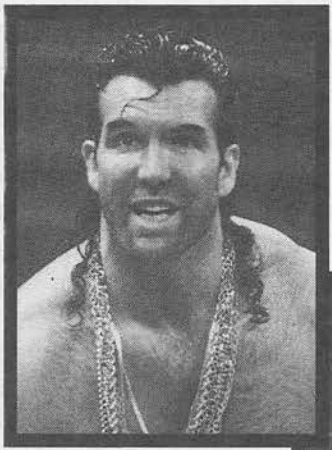
He's no Hulk Hogan. If he was, the WWF would be in great shape right now. It isn't. □



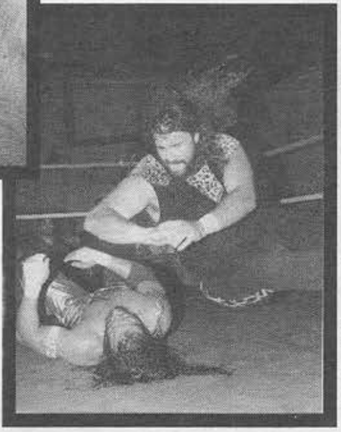
By now, no one expects Lex Luger to be another Hulk Hogan. But if he could reach his full potential, it would help the WWF when it dearly needs a boost.

this month in...

Inside Wrestling



RAZOR RAMON on the "Hotseat": "**DIESEL'S** a small, small man, man!"



CACTUS JACK vs. **SABU**: hardcore heaven!

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All this—and much more!—in the November 1994 issue of ***Inside Wrestling***

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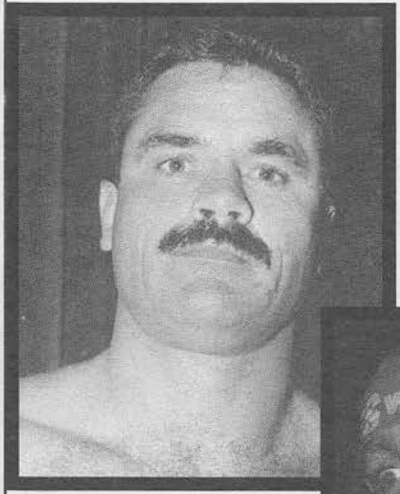
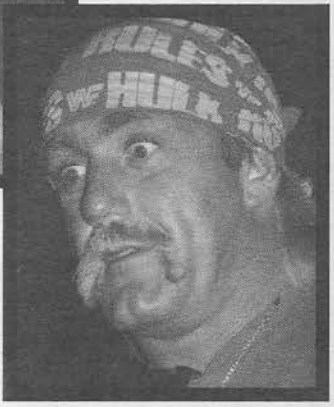


Is **RICK RUDE** the next threat to **BRET HART**?



Now it can be told: **HULK HOGAN** is terrified of **BIG VAN VADER**

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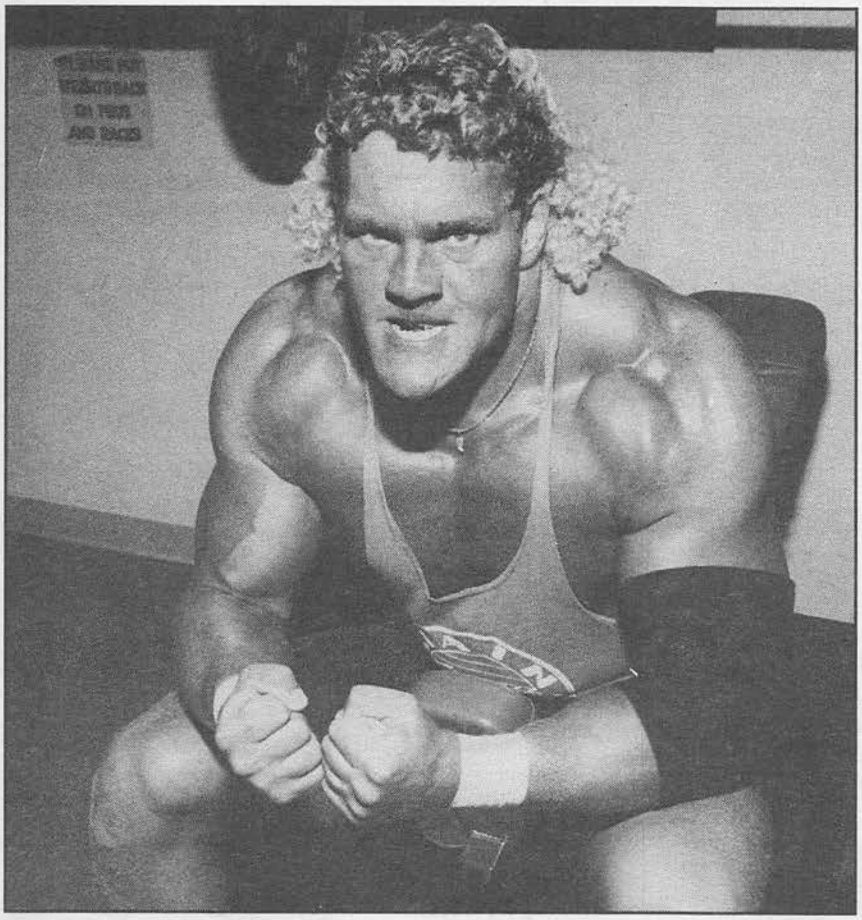


Sid Vicious appeared on a recent USWA card in Memphis. The muscleman attacked Jerry Lawler to help Tommy Rich win a six-man tag team elimination match.

this action. This was a Pier Six brawl, plain and simple. No surprise, because Cactus and Sabu are two wrestlers who love getting pain as much as giving it. Sabu won, but action continued for five minutes after the pin as they used chairs, glass bottles, and even a frying pan(!) as weapons. Now that's intense.

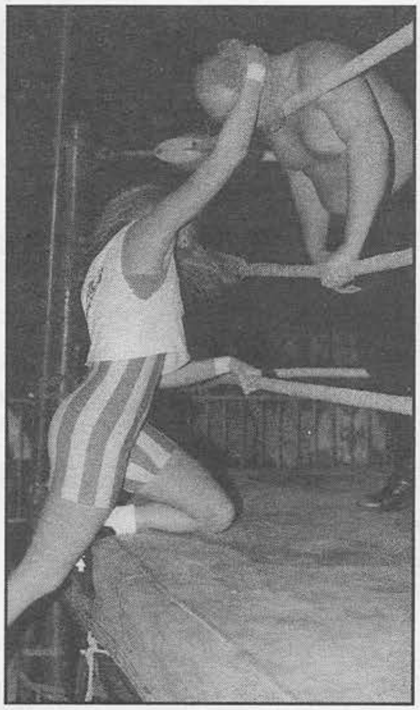
Sid Vicious has resurfaced in Memphis, much to **Jerry Lawler's** chagrin. The huge former WCW star attacked Lawler as part of a six-man tag team elimination match, helping **Tommy Rich** win the event. Rich's teammates were **"Dream Machine" Troy Graham** and **Doug Gilbert**.

PG-13 now has two tag team titles to its credit. The duo of **J.C. Ice** and **Wolfie D** was already USWA tag team champions, but added the W*ING tag belts by defeating **The Masters of the Orient** to win the honors in the finals of a double-elimination tournament. This team is coming on strong.

Most Smoky Mountain Wrestling cards are in high school gymnasiums, not arenas where ice hockey is played. But that hasn't stopped the federation from holding "penalty box" tag team matches, and early in July **The Thrillseekers** won four such bouts in as many days from **Well Dunn**. Under these rules, is the referee allowed to call a game misconduct?

If Smoky Mountain's **Tammy Fytch** is as intelligent as she claims to be, she will hereby restrict her wrestling activities to managing, not competing. The shrewd Ms. Fytch tried to wrestle alongside her **Brian Lee** and **Chris Candido** in mixed tag team matches, but was embarrassed by **Bambi** and **The Rock 'n' Roll Express**.

Finally, we offer our condolences to the family of WWF referee **Joey Marella**, who died July 4 in a traffic accident on the New Jersey Turnpike. Marella, 30, was driving home from a TV taping the night before in Ocean City, Maryland. He was the son of WWF TV analyst **Gorilla Monsoon**, and had built a reputation as one of pro wrestling's most reliable officials. □



Few dispute Tammy Fytch's managerial credentials, but her wrestling leaves plenty to be desired. Fytch, Brian Lee, and Chris Candido recently lost a series of mixed tag team matches to Bambi and The Rock 'n' Roll Express.

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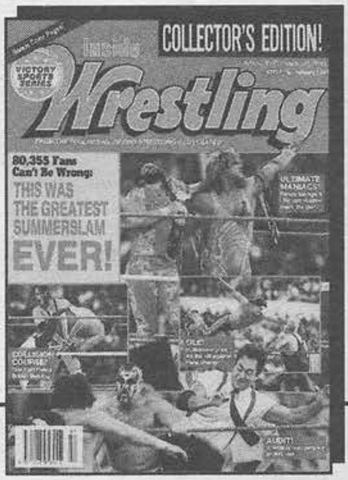

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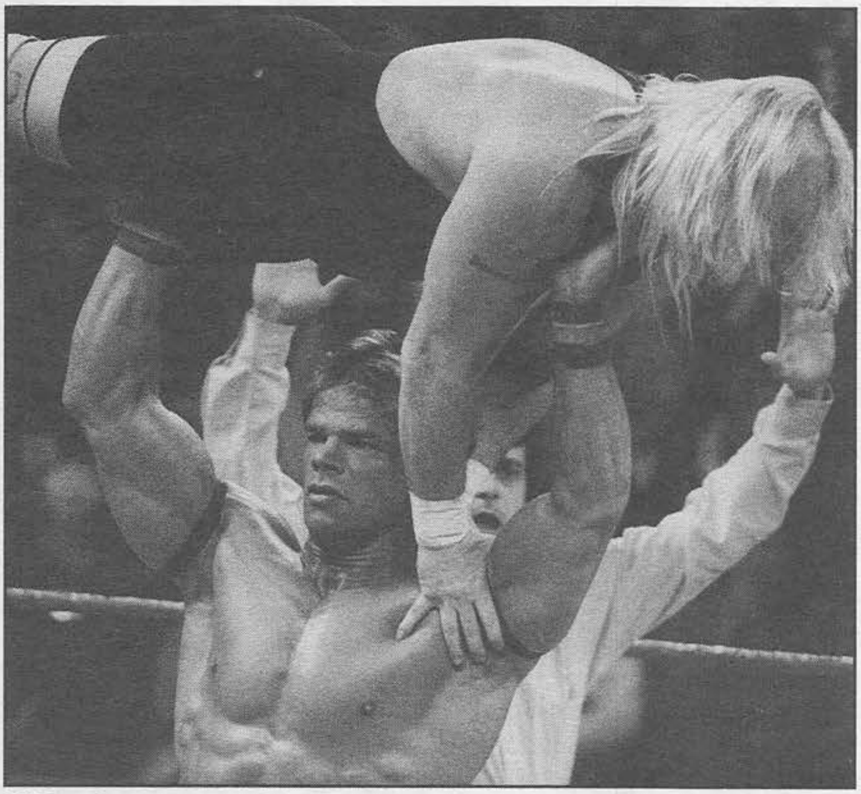


Will Lex Luger return to his rulebreaking ways? Senior Editor Bill Apter says it's possible, due to Luger's frustration over his inability to win the WWF World title.

A: **"Larry, you're probably one of those fat idiots who sits out in the stands stuffing his face with popcorn and orange soda, yelling 'Paula' and 'Paulina' every time Mr. Orndorff and I wrestle," replied Roma. "It's obvious to me that you're a very stupid person, so I won't waste my valuable time insulting you. I carried the Horsemen. The rest of those guys were washed-up bums. I was the only one smart enough to get out of that group before it fell apart completely. It's now my privilege to team with Paul Orndorff. People call us 'Pretty Wonderful' because we look great and wrestle better. We're the team of the future. The Horsemen are where they belong: dead and buried."**

***

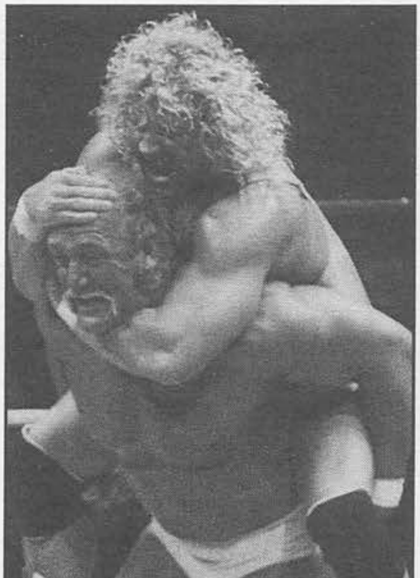
Q: "I have a question for Senior Editor Bill Apter: Do you expect Lex Luger to become a rulebreaker again?"—Paul Davids, Clearwater, FL

A: **"It is a possibility, Paul," said Apter. "It's funny, people have been asking me that since he became a fan favorite last summer. I've known Lex for a long time, and he is a good man. People say the patriotic Luger they saw last year wasn't the real Luger—that he just went on the 'Lex Express' tour to fuel his own ego. I know for a fact that Lex does love his country. But I'll also tell you that Lex has a very high opinion of himself. He's frustrated right now. Twice in the last year he came close to winning the WWF World title. He already has one WCW World belt to his credit and he knows he has the talent to win the WWF title. And I think if he keeps trying, he will capture it one day. Unfortunately, some wrestlers aren't always willing to wait. Lex has been a successful rulebreaker before, so it wouldn't surprise me to see him change his allegiances. I hope it doesn't happen, though."**

***

Q: "My question is for Curt Hennig: What's going on with you? Will you be wrestling in WCW soon?"—Peter Jenkins, Racine, WI

A: **"I am 'Mr. Perfect,' so that means I don't have to tell anyone what my plans are," Hennig replied. "If I want to take some time off, that's what I'll do. I'll get back to wrestling when I'm good and ready. If I do it in WCW, then you'll know when I want you to know. I already beat everybody in the WWF, so maybe I could find some different punks to demonstrate my perfection to. Hulk Hogan, Rick Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd—I could beat them all with two hands tied behind my back. If I go to WCW, it'll be your *privilege* to watch me wrestle!"** □



Curt Hennig says he'll return to wrestling when he's good and ready. That could be in WCW, where "Mr. Perfect" might take on Hulk Hogan and other former WWF rivals.

BACK ISSUES OF

THE Wrestler

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March 1986/Stories include: Von Erich, Duggan, Hansen-Martel.
June 1986/Stories include: Luger, Hernandez, Flair-Bockwinkel, Hogan, T.A.
July 1986/Stories include: King Kong Bundy, Koloff vs. Graham, Ric Flair.
August 1986/Stories include: Snuka, Bulldogs, Freebirds, Warriors, Duggan.
September 1986/Stories include: Fantastics, Adonis, Morton-Flair, Brody.
December 1986/Stories include: Flair, Bockwinkel, Hogan, Gilbert, Nikita.
January 1987/Stories include: Heenan, Garvins, DiBiase, Borne & Sawyer.
February 1987/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Gordy, Steamboat-Roberts.
March 1987/Stories include: Windham, Nikita, Adias, Savage-Steamboat.
April 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Rich-Lawler, R&R Express.
June 1987/Stories include: Flair-Windham, Can-Ams, Rhodes-Murdoch.
July 1987/Stories include: Cornette, Hyatt, Luger, Harts, Adams, Hansen.
August 1987/Stories include: Can-Ams, Luger vs. Nikita, Fantastics, Koko, Nord.
November 1987/Stories include: Williams, Luger, Hogan-Khan, Rich.
December 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Windham, Lawler, Flair, Beefcake.
January 1988/Stories include: Nikita-Taylor, Warriors, DiBiase-Duggan.
March 1988/Stories include: Hogan, Luger-Sting, Calgary, Demolition.
May 1988/Stories include: Horsemen, Hogan, Flair, Fantastics, DiBiase.
June 1988/Stories include: Sting-Flair, DiBiase, Kerry, Nikita, Zenk.
July 1988/Stories include: Fantastics, Hogan, Windham, McMahon, Rich.
August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Windham-Luger split, Demolition, Lawler, Ellering.
October 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Fantastics, Hennig, Roberts-Rude.
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January 1989/Stories include: Kevin Von, Rougeaus, Horsemen, Hogan.
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February 1990/Stories include: Sting-Luger, Gordy, Martel, Hogan-Brown.
March 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Flair-Funk, Hogan-Zeus, Survivors.
April 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Woman, Piper-Heenan, Travis.
May 1990/Stories include: Sting & Ultimate, Bossman, Von Erichs, Hogan.
June 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Rockers, Koloffs, Horsemen, Flair-Luger.
July 1990/Stories include: Poffo, Dusty-Savage, Luger-Flair, Doom, Blanchard.
August 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Warrior, Embry, Demolition, Doom.
September 1990/Stories include: Ultimate, Haynes, Luger, Doom, Tugboat.
October 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Ultimate, Flair, Rich.
November 1990/Stories include: Luger & Sting, Beefcake, Race, Steiners.
February 1991/Stories include: Sting-Vicious, Muta-Steamboat, Warrior, Hogan.
March 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Warrior, Piper, Cornette, Steiners.
April 1991/Stories include: Hogan, DiBiase, Skyscrapers, Luger, Zenk.
May 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Slaughter, Flair, Eaton, Sheik-Bobo.
June 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Nastys, Sting, Flair, Cactus Jack.
July 1991/Stories include: Flair-Fujinami, Nastys, Steiners, Savage.
August 1991/Stories include: Slaughter, Luger-Nikita, Hennig, Poffo.
September 1991/Stories include: Steiners vs. Sting & Luger, LOD, Cactus.
November 1991/Stories include: Luger, Steamboat, Piper, Global.
December 1991/Stories include: Flair-Hogan, Beverlys, Sting-Luger.
January 1992/Stories include: LOD, Badd, Hughes, Roberts, Gossett.
February 1992/Stories include: Flair, Simmons, Santana, Backlund.
March 1992/Stories include: Pillman, WWF title, Rude, Mountie-Hart.
April 1992/Stories include: Bearer, WCW magic, Hennig & Flair, LPWA.
May 1992/Stories include: Flair, Anderson & Eaton, Piper, Rhodes, USWA.
June 1992/Stories include: Flair-Hogan-Justice, Gilbert, Warrior, Vegas.
July 1992/Stories include: Rude, LOD, Madusa, Monsoon, Nurse Vanessa.
August 1992/Stories include: Warrior, Bunkhouse, Undertaker-Roberts, Sting.
September 1992/Stories include: LOD, Repo vs. Crush, Kleen, Freebirds.
October 1992/Stories include: Bulldog & Warrior, Lee, Martel-Tatanka, Austin.
November 1992/Stories include: Crush, Reed, Hennig, Sting, Rogers.
December 1992/Stories include: Hogan, Roberts, Simmons, Rock 'n' Rolls.
January 1993/Stories include: Ramon-Savage, Sting-Roberts, Disasters.
February 1993/Stories include: Hart, Rick Steiner, Backlund, Austin.
April 1993/Stories include: What's in/out, Ramon, Steamboat, Patriot, Tatanka.
June 1993/Stories include: Sting-Vader, Doink & Christopher, Steiners, Lawler.
July 1993/Stories include: Smith-Vader, Ramon, Rhodes, Tatanka, Bravo murder.
August 1993/Stories include: Hogan-Yokozuna, Jarrett, Vicious, Hart, Payne.
September 1993/Stories include: Ramon, Steiners, Simmons, Hart, Sting & Davey Boy.
October 1993/Stories include: Vader & Vicious, SummerSlam lists, sHart-Lawler.
November 1993/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Hogan, Luger, Jannetty, Bodies, Power
December 1993/Stories include: Luger, Sting & Flair, Fytch, Luna, Austin.
January 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Rude-Flair, Bagwell & Scorpio, Cornette.
February 1994/Stories include: Vicious & Arn, Yokozuna, Vader-Cactus, steroids. Bombs.
April 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Savage-Crush, Flair, Blayze, Adams, Boss.
May 1994/Stories include: Royal Rumble, Hulk minus bulk, Boss, Douglas-Sherri.
July 1994/Stories include: Flair vs. Hogan, DiBiase, Crockett, Douglas, WWF.
August 1994/Stories include: Cactus-Vader, M.O.M., Hart & Yokozuna, Badd.
October 1994/Stories include: Undertaker, Cactus, Scorpio-Sabu, Funk-Sheik.

THE WRESTLER

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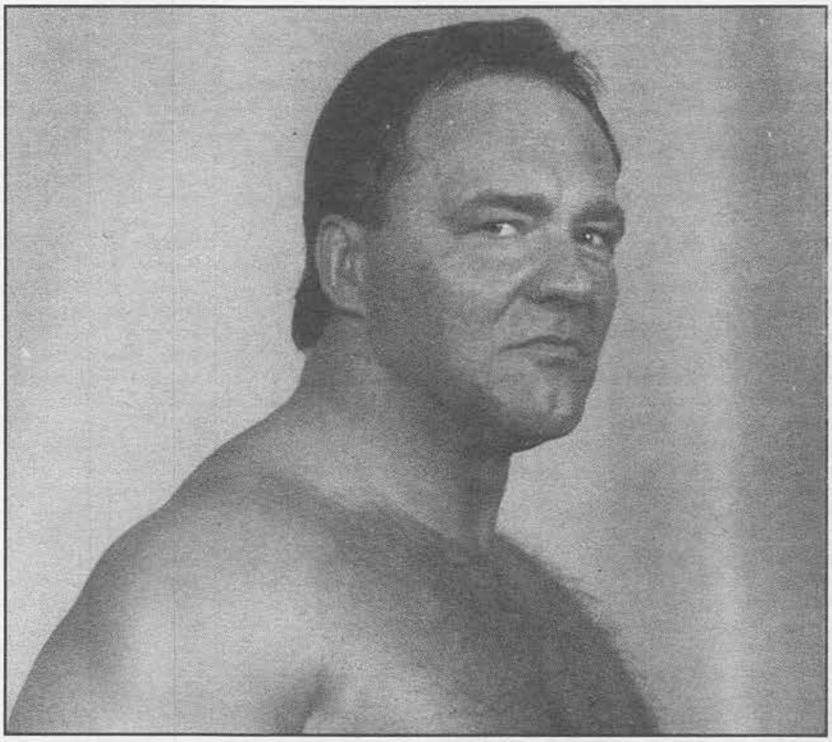
THE Wrestler SPOTLIGHTS...

Every month, *The Wrestler* will comb through its extensive photo files and shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. We'll present unforgettable highlights in the action-packed careers of the sport's greatest stars, culled from the most extensive photographic archives anywhere in the wrestling world!

LARRY ZBYSZKO



IT SHOCKED MANY when Larry Zbyszko came out of retirement this spring to challenge WCW TV champion Lord Steven Regal. But he knew what he was doing.

Zbyszko, a WCW broadcaster, beat the pompous Regal in a non-title bout at Slamboree '94, then won the belt at a TV taping in Atlanta. Regal ultimately regained the title at Clash of the Champions XXVII.

The self-proclaimed "Living Legend" was applauded for challenging Regal, but through the years has been one of wrestling's most controversial figures. He made his pro debut in 1972 as WWF World champion Bruno Sammartino's protege. He become a respected technical wrestler, but craved the spotlight.

Zbyszko and Tony Garea won the WWF World tag team title from The Yukon Lumberjacks in 1978. But his vicious attack on Bruno on WWF TV in 1979 is most vividly remembered. It began an intense feud that culminated in a steel cage match at Shea Stadium.

Zbyszko succeeded in other federations. In the NWA, he caused controversy by trying to buy the Georgia National title from Killer Brooks. NWA officials ruled the transaction illegal.

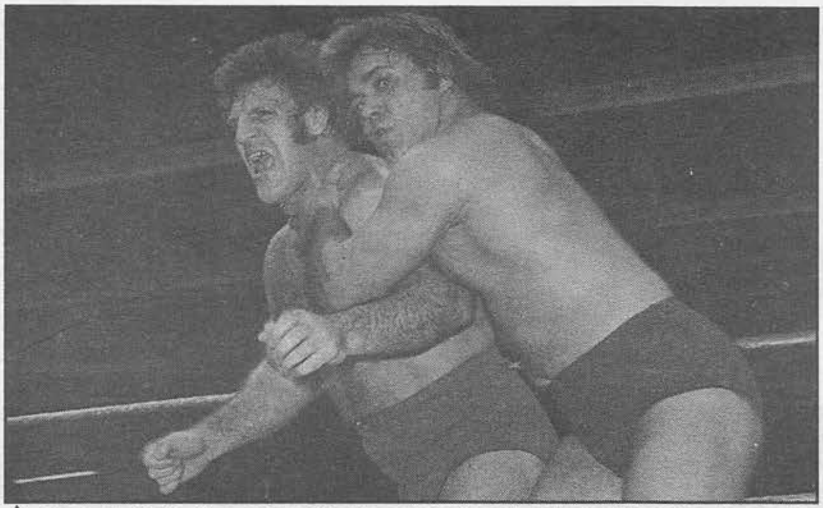
Two years later, he stirred up trouble in the AWA. He feuded with Nick Bockwinkel, Sgt. Slaughter, and others in the mid-1980s. Slaughter beat him for the AWA Americas title in June 1985. In 1987, Zbyszko helped Curt Hennig defeat Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA World title by handing him a roll of coins.

By 1988, the "Living Legend" was back in the NWA, where he beat Barry Windham for the Western States belt.

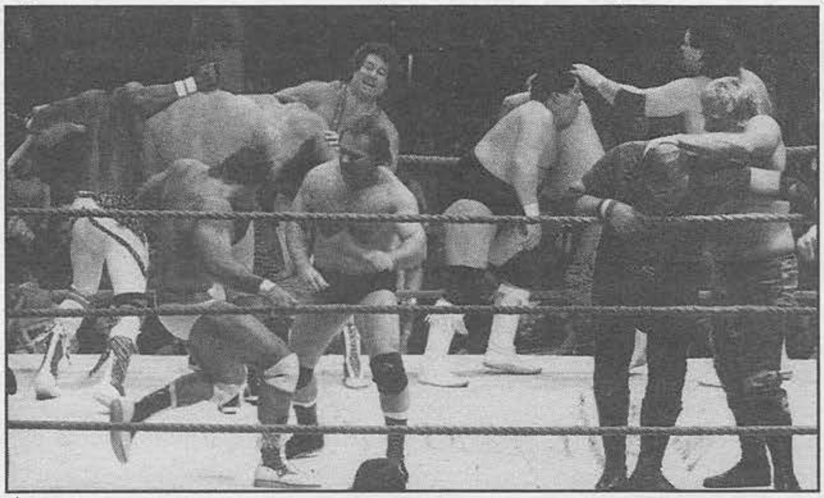
His greatest singles triumph came in the AWA in 1989. He won the vacant World title in a battle royal, last eliminating Tom Zenk. His reign lasted 368 days, as Mr. Saito unseated him in February 1990. He won the belt back in April, but left the federation in December, just before it folded.

Zbyszko moved to WCW in 1990, where he held the World tag team title with Arn Anderson for 2½ months in 1991.

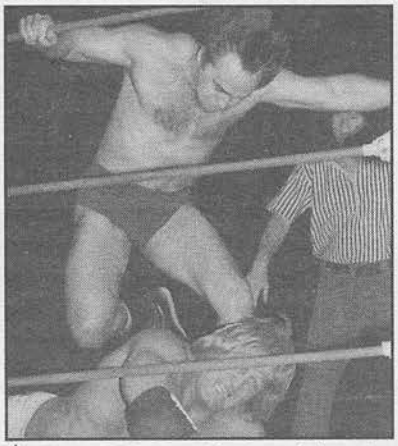
Whether Zbyszko plans to continue wrestling or return to broadcasting, he's done plenty to warrant time in the "Spotlight."



▲ January 1980: The student turns on the teacher. Larry Zbyszko began his career as a protege of Bruno Sammartino, but brutally attacked him in 1979 to begin a vicious feud. Bruno eventually beat him in a steel cage match.

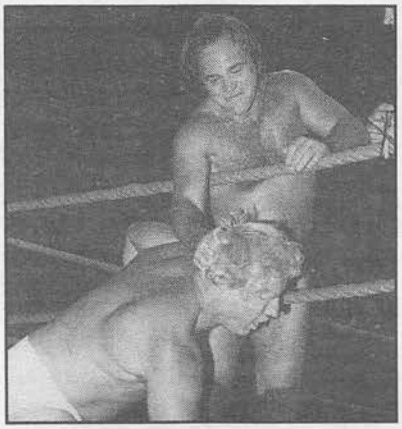


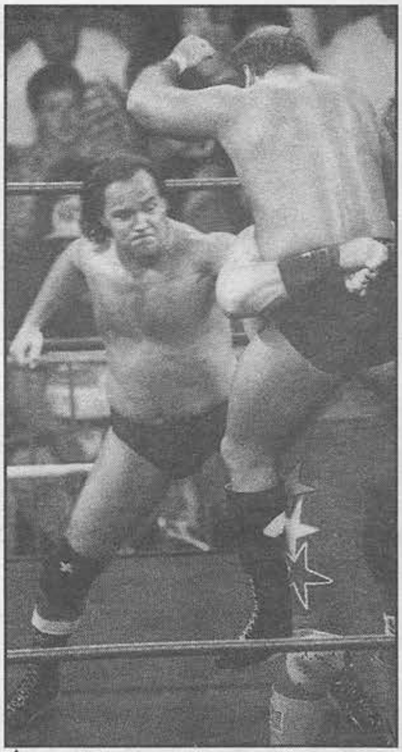
▲ February 1989: After 17 years, Zbyszko finally won a major singles belt by taking a battle royal in St. Paul, Minnesota, for the vacant AWA World title. He would remain champion for little over a year.



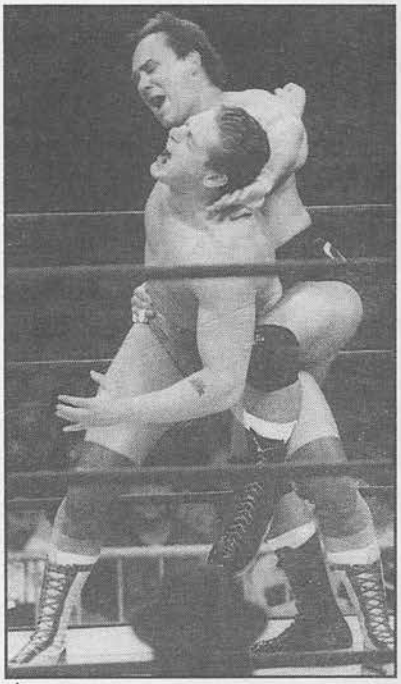
▲ May 1983: By this time, Zbyszko had moved to the NWA and feuded with Paul Orndorff. He later attempted to purchase the Georgia National belt from Killer Brooks after he upset Orndorff, but NWA officials invalidated the transaction.

▼ July 1987: Nick Bockwinkel, now WCW's commissioner, battles Zbyszko. Two months earlier, Zbyszko allegedly gave a roll of coins to Curt Hennig to help him kayo Bockwinkel for the AWA World title. Videotapes proved inconclusive.





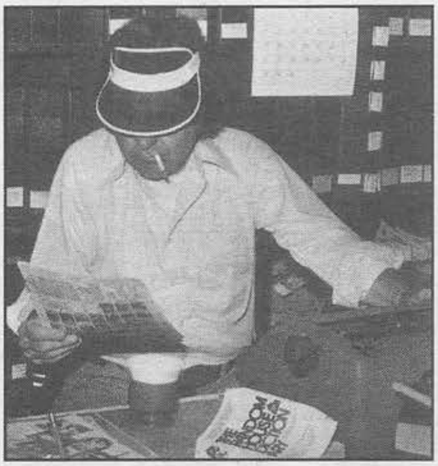
▲ October 1991: Zbyszko and Arn Anderson successfully defend their WCW World tag team title against The Patriots in Chattanooga, Tennessee. They won the vacant belts in a September tournament and held them through November.



▲ May 1994: Zbyszko was so incensed by Lord Steven Regal's pomposity that he left the broadcast booth to battle the Briton. The veteran upset the TV champion for the belt, although Lord Steven eventually won it back.

MATT BROCK'S LOOKING BACK

May 1979
NICK BOCKWINKEL
vs.
MAD DOG VACHON

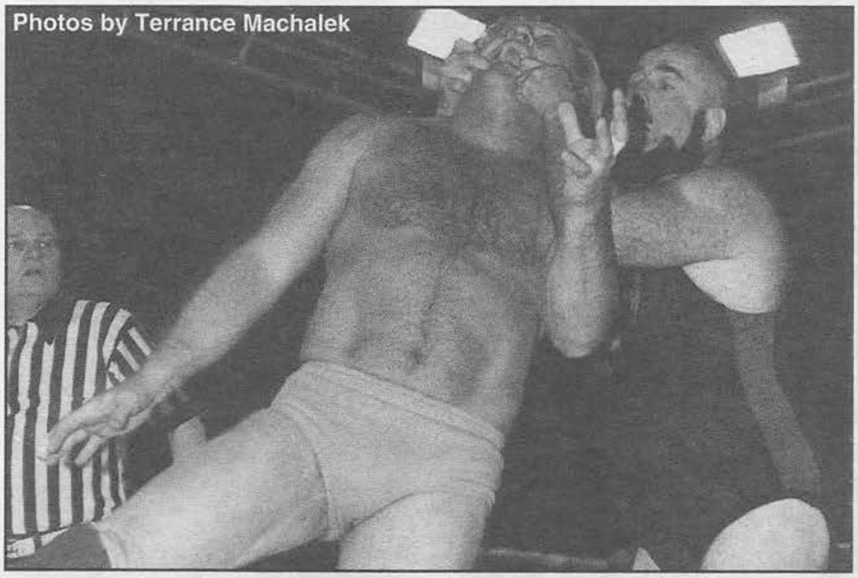


THERE HAVE BEEN plenty of maniacal wrestlers in this sport's history. Then there were those Vachons.

Anyone who has watched Alundra Blayze retain her WWF World Women's title of late knows what I'm talking about. Blayze has enhanced her reputation as this continent's best woman wrestler by taking everything Luna Vachon has thrown at her and more. That's more punishment than a wrestler of either sex should have to take.

But this column is about another Vachon—Luna's uncle, Maurice "Mad Dog" Vachon. Talk about fierce competitors! This guy was appropriately named, a Doberman pinscher of the squared circle. And one night, Nick Bockwinkel discovered what it's like to battle a Vachon.

Pure hell.

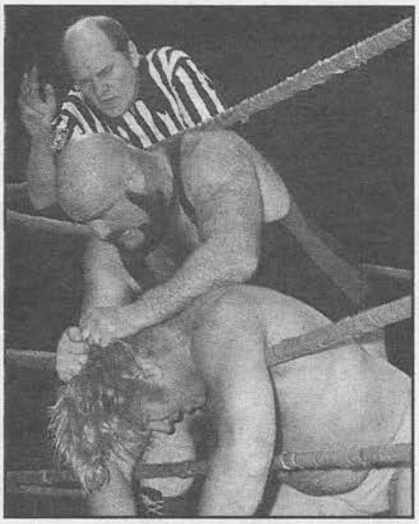


Photos by Terrance Machalek

If Nick Bockwinkel's dentist had been at ringside, he could have learned how many cavities were in his patient's mouth. Mad Dog Vachon's vice-like grip hurts as badly as any dental drill!

Mad Dog was no stranger to AWA fans who watched this card in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Yet in the minds of many, Mad Dog was an old dog, a relic of the past. He had held the AWA World title five times, but that was between 1964 and 1967. More than a dozen years had passed since he had last worn a title belt.

In contrast, Bockwinkel had been champion since 1975, when



Vachon was relentless against the AWA World champion. He attempted to tear off Bockwinkel's hair, and even went so far as to try to sever his ear.

he defeated Verne Gagne. Some thought he had a realistic chance of exceeding the length of Verne's seven-year reign. Bockwinkel, who, like Ric Flair, could never be tied down to either the fan favorite or rulebreaker camp, took on virtually all comers and put them all away. But he had never faced Mad Dog—and for good reason. They were once friends, and Nick had helped him revitalize his career.

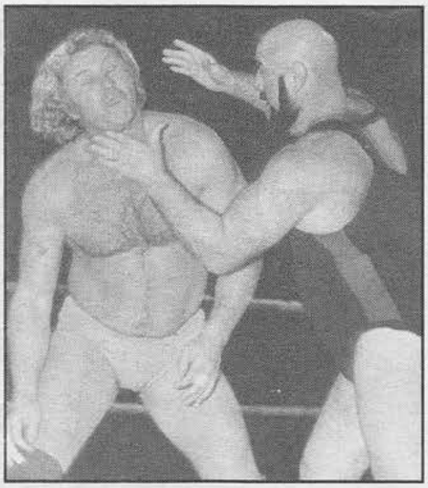
But Bockwinkel stopped teaching Mad Dog new tricks when Vachon became Gagne's tag team partner, a combination that flabbergasted many fans. Bockwinkel felt he'd been betrayed and promised he'd get even. "Traitors like Vachon don't deserve to live," he said.

Excited about this feud, I quickly boarded a plane to Winnipeg and the wheatfields of the Canadian prairie. This promised to be fun.

And was it ever. Any pretense of scientific wrestling quickly disappeared as these two brawlers went tooth and nail for the first minute or so. Bockwinkel gradually settled down into a more cautious style. When you've been champion that long, you learn how to pace yourself.

As challenger, Mad Dog had no such worries. He continued attacking relentlessly, later admitting he had no match strategy and was only wrestling spontaneously. Vachon tried to do damage to the champion's face, hair, and mouth. He even tried to lop off his ear *a la* Yukon Eric.

Once the assault reached this level, Bockwinkel seemed confused. Consequently, caution



Bockwinkel rallied and started attacking Vachon viciously. Mad Dog answered in kind. When the two began brawling out of control, the match was ruled a double-disqualification.

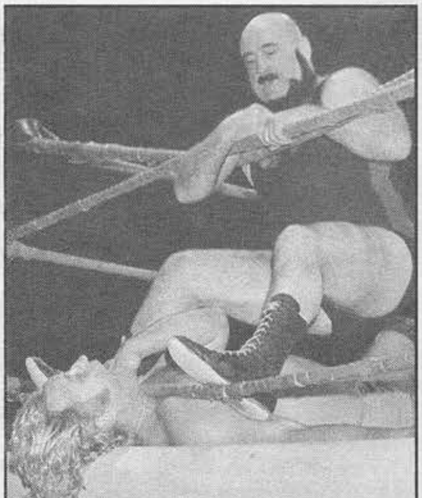
went out the window. The enraged champ began kicking, fighting, and clawing with a vengeance.

"I have never seen Nick Bockwinkel this mad in my lifetime," I said to an associate on press row. This man, a Twin Cities reporter who had watched Bockwinkel wrestle extensively since he turned pro in 1954, nodded his head and said, "You're not kidding, Matt."

With both men going at it like crazed animals, the brutality only got worse. Fans close to ringside began to rise from their seats, both to get a better view of the action and to be able to make a run for the exits in case the carnage came too close for comfort. Things deteriorated to the point where the bout was stopped and ruled a double-disqualification. It simply could not have ended any other way, though I and many others in the arena were disappointed neither could claim victory.

Bockwinkel continued to dominate the AWA, and even planned to go to other regional federations in an attempt to unite as many titles as possible. But a year later, in mid-1980, he lost the belt. The new champ? Verne Gagne, the 10th time he had claimed the belt over a two-decade span.

Mad Dog continued to wrestle and cause havoc until he retired in 1986. But his reckless style played an important role in inspiring Luna Vachon, as did her father, Butcher Vachon, and her late aunt, the great Vivian Vachon. So you can't blame Alundra Blayze if she sometimes feels as if she's taking on four wrestlers, not just one. □



Things look bleak for the champ, as Mad Dog's foot is on the bottom rope—and atop his throat! It took Vachon's assault to reach this level before Bockwinkel retaliated.

THE Wrestler

TOP 10

1 **BRET HART**
234, Calgary, Alberta
(1) WWF World champion

2 **HULK HOGAN**
275, Venice Beach, CA
(-) WCW World champion

3 **RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
(2) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

4 **STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Dallas, TX
(-) U.S. heavyweight champion

5 **DIESEL**
356, Las Vegas, NV
(7) WWF Intercontinental champion

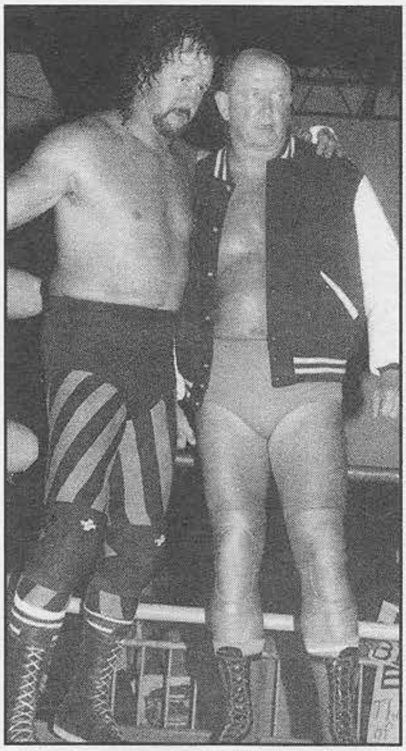
6 **STEVEN REGAL**
247, Blackpool, England
(-) WCW TV champion

7 **YOKOZUNA**
568, Samoa
(-) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

8 **TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksnort, TN
(10) Smoky Mountain champion

9 **STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
(4) No. 8 contender: WCW World title

10 **LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
(-) No. 11 contender: WWF World title



Terry Funk & Dory Funk Jr.

TAG TEAMS

1 **THE HEADSHRINKERS**
Combined weight: 520 pounds
(1) WWF World tag team champions

2 **PAUL ORNDORFF & PAUL ROMA**
Combined weight: 488 pounds
(-) WCW World tag team champions

3 **CHRIS CANDIDO & BRIAN LEE**
Combined weight: 477 pounds
(5) Smoky Mountain tag team champions

4 **THE NASTY BOYS**
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(3) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

5 **CACTUS JACK & KEVIN SULLIVAN**
Combined weight: 529 pounds
(2) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

6 **PG-13**
Combined weight: 471 pounds
(9) USWA tag team champions

7 **PUBLIC ENEMY**
Combined weight: 583 pounds
(6) ECW tag team champions

8 **MARCUS BAGWELL & THE PATRIOT**
Combined weight: 491 pounds
(-) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

9 **SCOTT & STEVE ARMSTRONG**
Combined weight: 436 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: Smoky Mountain tag title

10 **DORY FUNK JR. & TERRY FUNK**
Combined weight: 497 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

WCW

World Champion:
HULK HOGAN
(C) 275, Venice Beach, CA

1—STEVE AUSTIN
(1) 241, Dallas, TX
2—RIC FLAIR
(C) 243, Minneapolis, MN
3—STEVE REGAL
(6) 247, Blackpool, England
4—RICK STEAMBOAT
(2) 238, Honolulu, HI
5—BIG VAN VADER
(3) 450, Denver, CO
6—DUSTIN RHODES
(8) 254, Austin, TX
7—JOHNNY B. BADD
(-) 235, Macon, GA
8—STING
(4) 260, Venice Beach, CA
9—THE GUARDIAN ANGEL
(9) 310, Cobb County, GA
10—BUNKHOUSE BUCK
(7) 239, Bucksnort, TN

WWF

World Champion:
BRET HART
(C) 234, Calgary, Alberta

1—DIESEL
(1) 356, Las Vegas, NV
2—OWEN HART
(2) 227, Calgary, Alberta
3—RANDY SAVAGE
(-) 237, Sarasota, FL
4—YOKOZUNA
(-) 568, Samoa
5—JERRY LAWLER
(-) 234, Memphis, TN
6—IRWIN R. SCHYSTER
(6) 248, Syracuse, NY
7—KWANG THE NINJA
(-) 250, parts unknown
8—TATANKA
(7) 250, Pembroke, NC
9—BOB BACKLUND
(-) 234, Princeton, MN
10—RAZOR RAMON
(3) 287, Miami, FL

GLOBAL

Global Champion:
CHRIS ADAMS
(C) 228, Stratford, England

1—ROD PRICE
(C) 265, Los Angeles, CA
2—ICEMAN PARSONS
(5) 245, St. Louis, MO
3—ACTION JACKSON
(-) 281, Dallas, TX
4—TERRY GORDY
(1) 289, Chattanooga, TN
5—BLACK PRINCE
(10) 243, Dallas, TX
6—ALEX PORTEAU
(8) 235, Dallas, TX
7—NICK GOLDEN
(-) 238, Dallas, TX
8—JIMMY GARVIN
(-) 242, Charlotte, NC
9—DEVON MICHAELS
(-) 231, Dallas, TX
10—BUTCH REED
(2) 265, Kansas City, MO

USWA

USWA Champion:
SID VICIOUS
(C) 318, West Memphis, AR

1—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER
(2) 230, Memphis, TN
2—JERRY LAWLER
(C) 234, Memphis, TN
3—TROY GRAHAM
(1) 237, Memphis, TN
4—TOMMY RICH
(4) 248, Hendersonville, TN
5—DOUG GILBERT
(3) 241, Lexington, TN
6—SPELLBINDER
(5) 246, parts unknown
7—REGGIE B. FINE
(-) 215, Memphis, TN
8—BART SAWYER
(-) 235, Portland, OR
9—JEFF GAYLORD
(-) 280, St. Louis, MO
10—DOUG BASHAM
(-) 228, Memphis, TN

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

1 **HULK HOGAN**
275, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: unrated

2 **BRET HART**
234, Calgary, Alberta
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular

3 **RAZOR RAMON**
287, Miami, FL
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular

4 **THE UNDERTAKER**
328, parts unknown
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular

5 **STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular

6 **LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular

7 **RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular

8 **RANDY SAVAGE**
237, Sarasota, FL
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular

9 **TATANKA**
250, Pembroke, NC
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular

10 **DUSTIN RHODES**
254, Austin, TX
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular

MOST HATED

1 **OWEN HART**
227, Calgary, Alberta
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated

2 **BIG VAN VADER**
450, Denver, CO
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated

3 **JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated

4 **STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Austin, TX
Last issue: Unrated

5 **CRUSH**
322, Kona, HI
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated

6 **IRWIN R. SCHYSTER**
248, Syracuse, NY
Last issue: No. 7 Most Hated

7 **BAM BAM BIGELOW**
368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated

8 **JAKE ROBERTS**
253, Stone Mountain, GA
Last issue: No. 9 Most Hated

9 **YOKOZUNA**
568, Samoa
Last issue: unrated

10 **BUNKHOUSE BUCK**
239, Bucksnort, TN
Last issue: unrated

SMOKY MOUNTAIN

Smoky Mountain Champion:
TONY ANTHONY
(C) 235, Bucksnort, TN

1—CHRIS CANDIDO
(5) 226, Carteret, NJ

2—BRUISER BEDLAM
(2) 235, Newark, NJ

3—BRIAN LEE
(4) 251, Los Angeles, CA

4—TRACEY SMOTHERS
(3) 227, Atlanta, GA

5—TIMOTHY WELL
(10) 237, Dallas, TX

6—KENDO THE SAMURAI
(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan

7—SCOTT ARMSTRONG
(-) 212, Marietta, GA

8—STEVEN DUNN
(8) 240, Tampa, FL

9—RICK MORTON
(6) 228, Memphis, TN

10—STEVE ARMSTRONG
(-) 224, Marietta, GA

ECW

ECW Champion:
SHANE DOUGLAS
(C) 223, Pittsburgh, PA

1—SABU
(2) 220, Bombay

2—TERRY FUNK
(1) 247, Amarillo, TX

3—MIKEY WHIPWRECK
(3) 187, New York, NY

4—TOMMY DREAMER
(9) 245, Yonkers, NY

5—TASMANIAC
(5) 221, Tasmania

6—MR. HUGHES
(8) 308, Kansas City, KS

7—ROCKIN' REBEL
(-) 219, Philadelphia, PA

8—THE SANDMAN
(6) 244, Philadelphia, PA

9—TOMMY CAIRO
(4) 257, Philadelphia, PA

10—PIT BULL PSYCHO MIKE
(10) 227, Penny Pot, NJ

For period ended July 21, 1994

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1—RIC FLAIR	82 points
2—BRET HART	80 points
3—STING	50 points
4—YOKOZUNA	49 points
5—RAZOR RAMON	48 points

TAG TEAMS

1—THE NASTY BOYS	91 points
2—THE QUEBECERS	61 points
3—THE HEADSHRINKERS	48 points
4—RICK & SCOTT STEINER	46 points
5—THE HEAVENLY BODIES	39 points

AAA: AAA Champion—Konnan; 1—The Love Machine; 2—Jake Roberts; 3—Perro Aguayo; 4—Octagon; 5—Cien Caras; 6—El Hijo Del Santo; 7—Eddy Guerrero; 8—Blue Panther; 9—Psicosis; 10—Miguel Perez Jr..

IWCCW: IWCCW Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Manny Fernandez; 2—Cousin Luke; 3—Gino Caruso; 4—Joe Savoldi; 5—Tito Santana; 6—Chris Michaels; 7—L.A. Gore; 8—Tony Atlas; 9—Kodiak Bear; 10—Power Blaster I.

MTW: MTW Champion—Machine Gun Kelly; 1—Bobo Brazil Jr.; 2—Sean Casey; 3—Bruiser Bedlam; 4—Chris Carter; 5—Rock Stevens; 6—Johnny Paradise; 7—J.T. Lightning; 8—Scott Summers; 9—Denny Kass; 10—Mohammed Saad.

PWA: PWA Champion—The Hater; 1—Charlie Norris; 2—Blake Beverly; 3—Storm Trooper Aaron; 4—Punisher; 5—Mr. Dynamic; 6—Storm Trooper Willie; 7—Jerry Lynn; 8—Tommy Ferrara; 9—J.B. Trask; 10—Mr. Destruction.

PWF: PWF Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Italian Stallion; 2—George South; 3—Brian Williams; 4—Cruel Connection II; 5—Tyrone Knox; 6—Flaming Youth; 7—Gladiator II; 8—Russian Assassin II; 9—Black Scorpion; 10—Masked Maniac.

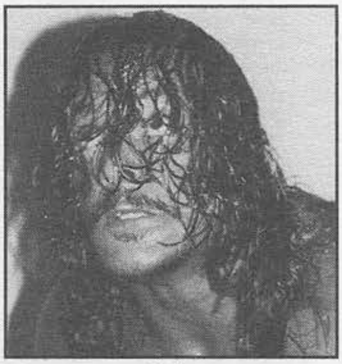
WWA: WWA Champion—Friendly Frank; 1—King Kong Bundy; 2—Abudah Singh; 3—Boy Gone Bad; 4—Ray Odyssey; 5—Chris Weider; 6—Ed Atlas; 7—Akita Kaos; 8—Ramblin' Rich; 9—Gus the Greek; 10—A.C. Connor.

WWWA: WWWA Champion—Brutus Beefcake; 1—Jack Hammer; 2—Nailz; 3—Sid Vicious; 4—Tito Santana; 5—Rick Martel; 6—Harley Lewis; 7—Johnny Gunn; 8—Jim Neidhart; 9—Abdullah the Butcher; 10—King Kaluha.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 20 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans

Love those rulebreakers! There was a day when the line between fan favorites and rulebreakers was pretty obvious. Not anymore. Today, some of the most heinous rulebreakers in the sport actually hear a lot of cheers.



Sabu

Nowhere is that more true than in ECW, where it's sometimes tough to tell who is a fan favorite and who is a rulebreaker. **Sabu**, though he wrestles with no regard for the rules and is managed by the conniving **Paul E. Dangerously**, is a favorite of Philadelphia fans because of his reckless style. Even when the Bombay, India, native faces popular rivals such as **Terry Funk** and **Cactus Jack**, he is still greeted by a mixture of cheers and boos.

In WCW, it is becoming obvious that **Ric Flair** is more concerned about destroying **Hulk Hogan** than winning over fans. The "Nature Boy" was a full-fledged fan favorite when he upset **Big Van Vader** for the WCW World title last fall, but has been slowly reverting to rulebreaker form ever since.

When Hogan made his first appearance at a WCW card—at Clash of the Champions XXVII in Charleston, South Carolina—he was booed by some fans. Others held signs showing their support for Flair and their disdain for Hogan.

You could argue that Flair is cheered by some because WCW fans resent the presence of the "Hulkster," the most famous wrestler in *WWF* history. This is probably true. But throughout Flair's career, most fans have come to appreciate his talent and charisma. They might not be thrilled that he is targeting some of their other favorite wrestlers, but they love to watch him anyway.

For now, because neither Flair nor Sabu is universally loved or hated, we're not listing them in the Most Popular or Most Hated categories.

Things are just as chaotic in the WWF. Remember the strange saga of **Doink the Clown**. The jester made no effort to make children laugh when he debuted in the federation several years ago. He got his thrills from playing cruel jokes on fan favorites and delighted in inflicting pain on his foes.

Even then, Doink (and his numerous clones) had a cult following. But it wasn't until the clown saw the error of his ways and went the fan favorite route that we considered him one of the 10 most popular athletes in the sport.

Now it seems Intercontinental champion **Diesel** is following a similar route. The seven-footer is one of the meanest and most intimidating men in the WWF, but he admits he has no regard for the fans or what they think.

Diesel loathes **Razor Ramon**, who's been in our Most Popular rankings for months, and will stop at nothing to destroy him. He and cohort **Shawn Michaels** even sneak-attacked World champion **Bret Hart** shortly before King of the Ring. Diesel used his devastating jackknife power bomb on the "Hitman" during a "King's Court" segment.

Nonetheless, on most WWF cards, even when he is facing Ramon, Diesel still receives a lot of support from the crowd. In fact, on one card in England this spring, fans were very vocal in their support of him in a match against **Tatanka**.

No one is sure why, but WWF fans love to watch Diesel. Because of this, we have removed his name from the Most Hated rankings in this issue.

Ironically, **Bob Backlund**, who during his nearly six-year reign as WWF World champ was one of the cleanest fan favorites you'll ever see, used to hear some boos because he was too nice and his style was too scientific. Recently, Backlund did take a step toward rulebreaking.

Bob Backlund

He thought he had pinned Hart for a three-count at a TV taping in Ocean City, Maryland. After the referee ruled he hadn't and Hart pinned him, Backlund went ballistic. He refused to shake the "Hitman's" hand and put him in a chicken wing for several minutes. It took a handful of referees to pry him off.

Backlund was booed for this. Afterward, he glared at his own hands, apparently wondering what he'd just done. We're not expecting Backlund to turn rulebreaker, so we haven't listed him as one of the 10 Most Hated wrestlers.

What's going on here? If you think you know why certain rulebreakers are becoming so popular, please send us your thoughts. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 956, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

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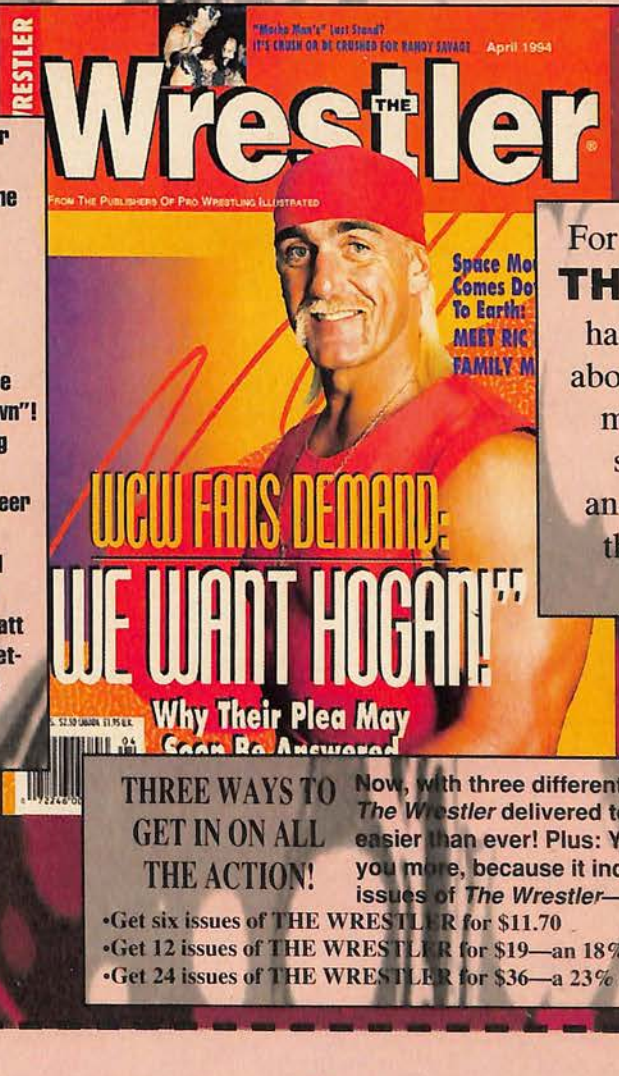

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